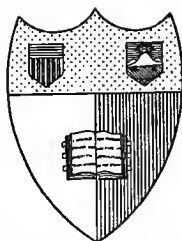


MUSIC
R12
3800
542



Cornell University Library
Ithaca, New York

BOUGHT WITH THE INCOME OF THE
SAGE ENDOWMENT FUND
THE GIFT OF
HENRY W. SAGE
1891

MUSIC

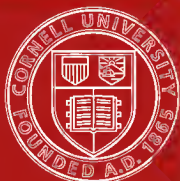
Cornell University Library
ML 3800.S42

The philosophy of modernism (in its conn



3 1924 022 195 659

mus



Cornell University
Library

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

The Music-Lover's Library

EDITED BY

A. EAGLEFIELD HULL,
MUS. DOC. (OXON)

THE
PHILOSOPHY OF MODERNISM
(IN ITS CONNECTION WITH MUSIC)

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME.

THE MUSIC-LOVER'S LIBRARY.

A series of small books on various musical subjects in a popular style for the general reader.

Editor: A. EAGLEFIELD HULL, Mus. Doc. (Oxon).

Each about 200 pages.

Short History of Music. By the EDITOR.

Shakespeare: His Music and Song. By A. H. MONCUR-SIME.

Short History of Harmony. By CHARLES MACPHERSON,
F.R.A.M., Organist of St Paul's Cathedral.

The Story of Mediæval Music. By R. R. TERRY, Mus. Doc.
(Dublin), Director of Music at the Pro-Cathedral, Westminster.

Music and Religion. By W. W. LONGFORD, D.D., M.A.

Modern Musical Styles. By the EDITOR.

On Listening to an Orchestra. By M. MONTAGU-NATHAN.

Everyman and His Music. By P. A. SCHOLES.

The Foundations of Musical Æsthetics. By J. B. McEWEN,
M.A., F.R.A.M.

The Voice in Song and Speech. By GORDON HELLER.

Design or Construction in Music. By the EDITOR.

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRUBNER & CO. LTD., LONDON.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF MODERNISM

(IN ITS CONNECTION WITH MUSIC)

BY

CYRIL SCOTT

LONDON

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRUBNER & CO., LTD.

BROADWAY HOUSE, 68-74 CARTER LANE, E.C.

A. 454778

Transferred from Olin

6/6/67

JCS

TO
MY FRIENDS AND PUBLISHERS
W. ELKIN
AND
W. STRECKER

THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY AND
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

MUCH of the subject-matter of this book having appeared in the form of Articles, the Author begs to thank the Editors of the following Magazines: *The Monthly Musical Record*, *The Musical Standard*, Schirmer's *Musical Quarterly*, *The Herald of The Star*, *The Occult Review*, and *The New Statesman*.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. CLASSICISM, ROMANTICISM, AND FUTURISM	1
II. ORIGINALITY AS A SENSE	10
✓ III. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF STYLE	17
IV. THE FACULTY OF UNLEARNING	24
V. INTELLECT AND SIMPLICITY	30
VI. MUSICAL EXPRESSIBILITY	42
VII. FORM AND EVOLUTION	53
VIII. PRESENT-DAY CHANGES	60
IX. THE LAW OF RECURRENCE	68
X. CRITICISM AND THE CRITICAL FACULTY	79
XI. THE HIDDEN ASPECTS OF MUSIC	97

APPENDICES

I. THE OCCULT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOUND AND COLOUR	111
II. THE MUSICAL CONSTITUTION OF ENGLAND	119
III. PERCY GRAINGER : THE MUSIC AND THE MAN	125

PHILOSOPHY OF MODERNISM

CHAPTER I

CLASSICISM, ROMANTICISM, AND FUTURISM

THE prerequisite to immortality in the world of art is the capacity to create something new, or, in other words, the capacity to invent a style. Indeed, let any one but survey the past history of music, poetry and painting, and he will notice that each great name stands for a literary or musical *invention*: so that to talk of Keats or Shelley, Beethoven or Wagner, is not to talk of men only, but also of very distinct styles of art. And this capacity to create something new proceeds from a certain divine discontent—divine, because it stimulates evolution, is mild and pleasant, yet just sufficient to prevent the man who possesses it from sinking into that unprogressive lassitude so often associated with a good glass of port wine, a widow's cruse of tobacco, and a rather soporific fireside. Such a combination of pleasant circumstances, in fact, together with the man who enjoys them in dreamy contemplation, affords a simile of the artist impregnated with the attitude of classicalism—

the attitude which regards all existent masterpieces, and the rules and traditions they have engendered, as something never to be diverged from, but alone to be imitated and enjoyed for evermore.

Now, as everybody who studies the æsthetics of art must know, there were until lately two distinct schools of thought, the Classic, just referred to, being one, and the Romantic, its antithesis, being the other; but at the end of last century a third came into being, which its votaries christened the "Futuristic," though the term is somewhat ambiguous, as we shall have occasion to see later. As to the first, our simile has attempted to show it must lead to creative stagnation, and to nowhere beyond, for it may be regarded as a species of pharisaism in art, a petty adherence to rule and letter, ignoring the true spirit; the value of originality, individuality, and self-expression in its highest sense. In a word, it may be described as a profane contentment, because it is the enemy of divine evolution, and should it vanquish its opponents, which, of course, it never can do, then no more could a masterpiece be created in the world of art. The truth is, classicalism is based, at any rate in music, upon a gigantic misconception—the misconception that any great genius was ever classical *in his day*. No composer of the first rank has ever adhered to traditions; he has always overstepped them,

and hence every masterpiece is the result of romanticism. Indeed, what pedants call classicalism is nothing but that transformation *apparently* brought about when the dust of years settles on what was once a *romantic* masterpiece. In fine, it is in one sense a myth and a superstition.

But, leaving this first attitude and turning to the second, romanticism and its tenets may be expressed in the following short sentence: "In order to create something beautiful, one must create something new; and although it be good to admire those who have gone before, it is bad to imitate them." Nevertheless, admitting the correctness of these tenets, especially the first, we must not fall into the error of reversing the matter, and presuppose, because a thing is new, it must of necessity be beautiful: for the man who laboured with the sole intention of creating something entirely different from anything that had ever existed before, would probably end in either creating a monster or a thing devoid of utility in any sense of the word. Newness, in fact, must be attained within certain limits only, otherwise it will not be susceptible of comprehension. Furthermore, it would be outside the domain of art altogether, and for the simple reason that it would not be either an emotional or logical expression, but merely a production devoid of meaning. All the same, it must be noted that, although newness should be confined

to certain limits, *within* those limits it ought to branch out in many directions if an intrinsically great work of art is to be achieved. Thus the poet, for instance, who invented new versification, but gave expression alone to trite sayings, would not be as profound and great a poet as he who invented both new versification and sayings of originality and depth. For the true romanticist is an inventor in all directions, though, at the same time, an *honest* inventor (a point needful to be emphasised) who strives to invent a beautiful thing—beautiful, at least, in his own estimation, whether others may perceive that beauty at the time or not.

And now to pass on to the third attitude, or what has been labelled “futurism” in music, though, as already said, the term is ambiguous, and therefore full of pitfalls for the critic and analyst. To begin with, the word “futurist” involves a certain arrogance and a degree of assurance which were, if it be *thought* in the secret chambers of the mind, at any rate, best not given outward expression by the futurist himself. Indeed, to enrol oneself in the school of futurism—to confess, in other words, the futuristic faith—is, among other things, to imply the following attitude of mind: “I am so new, so utterly without precedent in the history of art, that nobody of the present generation can possibly be expected to understand me, therefore

I must rely for that comprehension entirely on the future." Not that the futurist, on being accused of this rather naïve arrogance, would be likely to admit it without a struggle, any more than certain members of very narrow Christian sects would openly admit to some adherent of an opposing sect that salvation was not for *him*, but alone for them ; but this would not alter supposed facts, but merely enveil them. This arrogance, however, we may dismiss as a mere curiosity not quite devoid of entertainment, and of no further importance in our contemplation of futurism itself, for, after all, whether a "school" be tainted with this or that human weakness is not the vital question we have to decide ; but whether its tenets and tendencies are sound in themselves : and, to put the matter concisely, we may say that futurism is an attempted elongation of romanticism carried to an illogical conclusion—illogical, because all things do not admit of successful elongation—though, in one sense, the futurist is perfectly logical, but, unfortunately, in a sense devoid of utility. As the romanticist holds that in order to create a *beautiful* work of art it is essential to be new, the futurist holds that beauty is of no importance whatever ; in other words, the romanticist believes in newness *within* limits, the futurist believes in newness *without* limits. Thus the divine discontent of the romantic school (divine being a synonym for

beauty) has become a satanic discontent in the futuristic one ; indeed, so emphatic has it become in certain phases of modern art, music included, that, rather than leave a faint shadow of resemblance with pre-existent masters, a number of artists and composers have lost sight of the real function of art and degenerated into mere experimentalists. The theories of these various classes of artists, however, are too well known to need dissecting here, but if we were to collect the futurists, cubists, motionists, and others of the same tendency, and wished to generalise and bring them all under one heading, the word "monsterists" would, I think, be applicable : and the reason for this denomination is not far to seek, for the incentive to create with these numerous workers is, as already said, no longer beauty as the fundamental inspiration, but merely this, that, or the other theory—the real reason being the one desire to create something new. As already stated, however, to set out with this one desire is to end in creating a monster, because newness, to be of intrinsic value, must always be within certain limits on the one hand, and, on the other, be consistent and practically continuous. We have maintained that for a thing to be beautiful it must perforce be new ; but the instructive factor in our so-called musical "futurists" is that, in spite of their—let us call it—excruciating newness, that very newness lies in one direction

only, and for this reason they become monsterists. To take an analogy from sculpture: if a human face were modelled with the nose a yard long, and an eye in the middle of the cheek, that piece of sculpture would be nothing short of a monster, not solely because it is new, but because it is not new in every direction: instead of being consistently novel, it is merely deformed. And it is into this error that the musical (and other) futurists seem to have fallen, for their novelty is entirely harmonic, and they have discarded all other factors which go to make an intrinsically great piece of musical composition. Melody, polyphony, and structure have not been revolutionised, but simply banished as utterly worthless, or things so antiquated as to be of no service in modern art. And yet, in contemplating true genius, has ever such a course been adopted before? The answer is in the negative. Indeed, looking at the two greatest Masters that ever appeared in the musical arena, Bach, as the first, added to the polyphony of his day and invented new harmonies and new melodies; Wagner, as the second, invented new structure, new harmonies, new polyphony, and new melody; in fine, he was novel in *all* directions, and therein lay his intrinsic greatness, and hence his utter lack of deformity and monsterism.

We may regard the logic of futurism, then, as merely inherent in its theories and not in its

practice, judging, at any rate, from the results so far obtained; for, as competently as one can judge from past history, the *modus operandi* by which an artist creates a great work of art is seldom, if ever, the outcome of a theory, but of an emotion, and the necessity of finding a medium for its expression. The artist who would soliloquise and say: "I should like to produce something, therefore I must first search for some theory to which I can attach myself, and work accordingly," would hardly succeed in fashioning a work of art worthy of the name; indeed, he would be on a par with the ordinary youth who, arriving at an age when it becomes necessary to acquire a means of livelihood, asks himself the important question: "What business, trade, or profession shall I adopt?" In other words, any man who enrolls himself in a certain school, instead of founding a school of his own, will ever remain more or less a mediocrity; for art is different in this respect to any other arena of activity.

Thus, in conclusion, it seems clear that of the three attitudes, romanticism is, and will be likely to remain, the most rational and productive of great art, since in reality it is the most fetterless, though seemingly less so than futurism—a statement which I concede appears on the surface paradoxical, but which is not so when judiciously analysed, since it only becomes necessary for

any man to set out with the idea (and attempt to adhere to it consistently) that on no account will he conform to any conventions whatever, and in this very undertaking he is at once binding himself as much as if he undertook to conform to every convention instead. (For to use a homely simile: as the classicist is like a pedestrian who embarks on a walking tour with the firm intention of keeping entirely *to* the roads, the futurist is like a pedestrian who starts out with the opposite intention of keeping entirely *off* the roads; thus both these pedestrians are the slaves of their respective intentions, and only the man who starts out with a perfect freedom of choice to follow or leave the road whenever he thinks fit, may be truly regarded as unbound by fetters: and this man, adjusted to the plane of art, is the true romanticist.

CHAPTER II

ORIGINALITY AS A SENSE

THERE are certain people who seem to be born in the caul of convention, and whose entire personalities are thus enveloped with an aura of the banal and essentially ordinary ; and these people, however clever, however intelligent, can never produce great works of art, for the prerequisite to artistic creation is lacking within them. Now that prerequisite is a certain sense ; a sense as marked as the sense of beauty, of symmetry, of colour, or of refinement, though more difficult of definition than any of these. As G. K. Chesterton has pointed out, there are certain things which, although neither mystical, vague, nor nebulous, things pertaining to everyday existence perhaps, offer extreme difficulties when any attempt is made to express them in words ; and that sense I have termed the "sense of originality" is one of these. For be it remembered that, whereas to explain even such a widely-tasted quality as "sweetness" to the man who had never tasted sugar, would be wellnigh

impossible, the attempt to explain a quality of an exotic nature, known to the few but unknown to the many, offers paramount difficulties which only in part we can hope to overcome. We are, in fact, somewhat in the same position as the mathematician striving to explain the fourth dimension, since, in order to do this, he is compelled to posit the non-existence of even the third dimension; just as we shall be compelled to arrive at some idea of the sense of originality by contemplating those in whom it is lacking altogether. And I allude to that type of man in whom banality exists as a supposed virtue; for whom it would not only seem an impropriety to act, dress, and think in any degree, however small, differently from other people, but in whom it would be deemed a virtue not even to desire to do so. This man, in fact (extravagant though the statement may seem), is a *poseur*; and a *poseur* because no two people in the world are exactly alike, and he who attempts to make himself exactly similar to his fellow-beings, and succeeds, is, in one word, *unnatural*. He lacks the sense of originality to such a degree that not only does he fail to manifest it at all, but is unaware of its latent existence, and hence is subconsciously suppressing it all his life—from his school-days to his dotage. Now this man's mind works in the entirely opposite direction to that of the "originalist"—if I may coin a

word for the sake of convenience. To the former all that shows *dissimilitude* from what already exists is regarded as bad taste, while to the latter, on the other hand, all (or nearly all) that shows *similitude* is regarded as such. In other words, the conventionalist feels discomfort when repetition is absent, the originalist feels discomfort when repetition is present : for *the sense of originality is merely the intensified consciousness of such weakness and tedium as arises from repetition and imitation*. That is how, to the best of my ability, I can describe it ; though in so doing I am only stating a fact and not a reason. There is, in truth, a matter for considerable speculation attached to this fact ; a speculation which but few minds trouble themselves with, because on the surface the answer seems so obvious. As little as an ordinary mind would bother to reflect why white is white or black is black—being content that it is so—would an ordinary mind bother to reflect why repetition and tedium always go hand in hand—indeed, if they *always* did go hand in hand, no inquiry into the matter would be of profit—but they do not, and it is just this variability which gives birth to the problem. How is it that a music-lover can listen with enjoyment numerous times to Wagner's Prelude to *Tristan and Isolde*, for instance, and yet only once, and without enjoyment, to a composition by one of Wagner's

imitators? The answer, which sounds satisfyingly plausible on the surface, is that the imitation is not as good and beautiful as the original. But through the agency of what occult law of Nature does this become a fact? For he who hears the work of the imitator is confronted by *partial* repetition only (remembering that repetition and imitation are inseparable), while he who hears repeatedly the work itself is confronted by absolute repetition: which implies that a certain type of mind is only conscious of tedium when confronted with the former.

But to get somewhat nearer to a solution of this problem, let us contemplate the originalist and his species of mentality, since permeating his whole "atmosphere" and surroundings there is a flavour of "something *à part*," something unusual, something different from everybody else. It manifests itself in the arrangement of his furniture, in his personal appearance, perhaps even in his manners and general deportment. To the unreflecting mind this man, of course, appears as a *poseur*, although, as already stated, it is the conventionalist who is in reality the *poseur* instead. It should be granted, however, that the former may sometimes with justification be regarded in this light, though the aspersion is without good reason all too frequently cast upon his personality: for motive and not action must ever be the criterion as to this. After all,

even manners are a pose, in the sense that they are cultivated and not the absolute heritage of birth, but this alone becomes evident when their cultivator adds to them something offensively extravagant—not because he thinks it beautiful, but merely because he desires to draw attention to himself—vanity, in a word, being his motive for so doing.

Now the whole distinction between the conventionalist and the originalist arises from a certain point of view, the latter holding that taste and refinement can never be associated with weakness and imitation; this point of view becoming as much a sense as that of symmetry or beauty. To imitate, with the originalist, is to awaken a consciousness of shame and weakness at variance with the sense of good taste; imitation irking him, partly because of its connection with repetition, and partly because of its connection with mental indolence: and he is, at the same time, conscious of an antithetical sense, the sense of triviality, which he avoids with as much avidity as the refined man avoids the vulgar; in this respect being the entire opposite to the conventionalist, who is devoid of this sense altogether. The latter, indeed, is entirely unconscious of the commonplace, because he is unconscious of this mental indolence in connection with it, and therefore content to think, act, and feel exactly as others do, having

no sense of monotony and no aspiration towards progress.

It becomes in part evident then, why the sense of originality is a prerequisite to the production of great art, and why, on the other hand, imitativeness is concomitant with weakness. Great, lasting, and profound work can only then be engendered when a man's mind is working up to its highest degree of efficiency—and for this reason it is that the votaries of classicalism overlook the important fact that to imitate a good thing is practically as infertile as to imitate a bad one. And they overlook it for two reasons : because they themselves possess no sense of originality to remind them it is lacking in others, and because the imitation of a *good* thing casts a glamour through which it is difficult to perceive the reality. How is it that a composer like Spohr and a poet like Rogers were at one time looked upon as great artists, whereas nowadays they are both ignored as unhearable and unreadable? The answer is : merely that their imitativeness of profound work glamoured serious music- and poetry - lovers into the belief that they themselves were profound ; just as, recently, Max Reger glamoured the German public into believing he was a Master. For, undoubtedly, the genitor of all these three men's ephemeral fame was nothing more than the mental indolence of their admirers : not an indolence so marked as to desire absolute

simplicity or puerility, but that complexity only to which they were already accustomed, and hence which fully satisfied their desire for partial repetition.

I think then, in conclusion, we may with truth say that originality does exist as a sense, and that it is undoubtedly an essential attribute of genius—because, only when the mind works in conjunction with it, is the highest degree of mental efficiency ensured ; an art-production, of whatever branch, being alone of lasting and intrinsic value when it is *creative*. For the mind as soon as it exercises this creative faculty is in tune with far higher planes than it is at any other moments of its activity, and the higher the plane, the more potent, the more lasting the result. Indeed, however wide a margin of meaning we may give to the Biblical statement that the Deity created man in His own Image, the fact remains that only when mortals (be they musicians, poets, painters, or what not) *create*, do they call into existence that permanency and immortality which are the attributes of God. Nay, so long as they are not *creating*, then they are dealing solely with the external, instead of with the *essential*, or the very soul of things. Thus the imitator only knows how to use his brain as the instrument of production, but the genius uses his soul : and therein lies the whole difference.

CHAPTER III

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF STYLE

Now a man's creative individuality is the outcome of his admirations, and anybody who has given the subject a moment's thought will see that this must be so. It is for this reason that an artist with too many admirations never possesses an individuality at all—unless, as in rare cases, he puts a good many of them away in pigeon-holes, and keeps them detached from his own creations. As style is the result of selection, and imitation—or, at any rate, *partial* imitation—is the result of admiration, to admire everything means to *select* nothing, and, probably, to imitate all things. If one probes deep into the works of any great creative individualist, it is not difficult to see from whence his style has come, but it is not always derived from the same art. To take Percy Grainger as an example, it is evident that his very marked style is largely called into being through his intense admiration for Rudyard Kipling—the spirit of whom he has, I feel, translated into music in

a way nobody else has—although others have used his works for musical settings. Again, Robert Schumann largely owes his style to the romanticism of Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, for whom he admitted an unbounded admiration; and other examples could be found and enlarged upon if space permitted.

The aggregate of a certain number of admirations, then, is the first step; but the second step is of equal, or even more importance, and that is—a continual self-criticism and mental control, which untiringly rejects from one's creative arena all the obvious and unsuitable and weaker ideas which are continually flowing into it. Or, to put it quite plainly (since I am writing for musical students rather than abstract philosophers and psychologists), if an idea, covering a few bars, is evolved or has struck one, and that idea is sufficiently *new*, either harmonically, melodically, or both of these, to justify its use for, let us say, the beginning of some musical composition, then it becomes necessary to reject all the ideas which follow as a prospective continuation to this first idea, *unless they are equally new and on the same height of artistic invention*. Now, as a great deal of comparative rubbish continually enters the head of every composer, whether he be great or small, I repeat that to do this requires a large amount of self-criticism, which prompts one only to be satisfied with the *best* one can produce

and absolutely nothing short of that: and this also infers an unusual degree of patience—a patience great enough to allow of one's seeking in every nook and cranny of one's mental area—usually filled with everybody else's ideas except one's own—until one finds something worthy of one's first little piece of inspiration and worthy of oneself. In fact, that the old adage, "Genius consists in an infinite capacity of taking pains," is as untrue as lazy people would have it, this is a thing which any honest thinker must deny; but, of course, it is true that all people who take pains are not geniuses, for many people take pains over the most foolish things.

And yet, this process just described exacts so much from human nature that one is compelled to point out that even the greatest Masters—be they composers or poets, or what not—are often "caught napping"—to use a vulgarism; for they either relapse into the obvious in the shape of the trivial, or the obvious in the shape of the classical, according to the temperament and tendencies of the Masters in question. To take Brahms as an instance; although he invariably exercised this self-control where his songs were concerned—hence their especial beauty—yet, in his longer works, there are moments when one feels that he was too easily satisfied with what came quite readily into his head, and either he *imitated* the classical spirit just as one could

imitate the music-hall spirit, or he imitated *himself*. In short, for, let us say, eight bars, he *invented*, and then for ten bars he merely *composed*. It will readily be seen, then, that to imagine (as some people do) a genius is a species of vessel into which is poured a *continual* golden rain of sublime ideas from Heaven without his making any effort whatever, is to imagine a fallacy which an inquiry into the workings and lives of great stylists, if undertaken with sufficient perspicacity, must annihilate. Undoubtedly, great ideas and inspirations come from higher planes to him who holds himself receptive, and this power of receptivity is what partly constitutes a genius. But Heaven is not so lavish with its gifts as to place entire and lengthy works of art, ready made, into the heads of geniuses, for them simply to copy out, so to speak, as a typist copies a letter. An inspiration, or idea, is received from a higher plane, which is, as it were, a pattern upon which to mould other ideas. Such a little flash of inspiration may come to a man walking along the street, thinking of other things but art or music; but a whole symphony obviously cannot come in this effortless way; the rest of it has to be sought for with that self-control and self-criticism alluded to, which shall ensure that the continuation be up to the same level of excellence as the pattern. That the most beautiful inspirations are some-

times marred by a momentary lapse of self-criticism is a sad fact, and, as it illustrates my point, I cannot help thinking of some stanzas of Browning in this connection, for that great poet, starting one of his poems with the exquisitely musical lines—

“Where the quiet-coloured end of evening smiles,
Miles and miles,”

instead of using them as a pattern wherewith to continue in that same musical peacefulness of word-placing, we find in one of the following verses not only a considerable “fall from grace” in the first line, but corresponding to the words “miles and miles,” the unmentionable banality of the little parenthesis “as you see.” One is, in fact, constrained to feel that Browning ought to have fished about in the waters of his mind for a fortnight to catch a better fish, rather than be content with this all-common and skimpy jack-sharp of an idea.

I have already mentioned the fact that an artist imitates himself, and at moments when one would wish him to invent something new. Nevertheless, there is a time at the beginning of a composer's career—the time when he is but learning to toddle towards a style—that a certain imitation is essential. A composer discovers a novel harmonic or melodic turn, and, to use an expressive phrase, he “runs it” for a time, employing it in everything he writes; but then,

there ought to come a moment when he tires of this, and searches further afield for still another novelty of expression to add to the first one, until that, too, begins to pall, when a third search is made, and so forth, until a complete style is evolved. There are, however, stylists of a sort who, having made but one or two of these searches into the realms of novelty, rest content with these, and imitate themselves until they have no longer a brain to imitate with. They possess, in fact, enough perspicacity not to imitate others, yet too little courage not to imitate themselves, the result being, for the listener, a feeling that, having heard one of their works he has heard all—paradoxical though it may sound. Now, if one compares a very great man like Wagner with a man like Grieg, although both of these men were undoubtedly stylists, one is a style with great branches in many directions, the other is a style with no branches at all. For one sees, with Wagner, that once he started *inventing* he went on doing so until the decline of his faculties; whereas Grieg *invented* but at the beginning and merely *composed*, afterwards—in short, he imitated himself from the moment he had found himself. This tendency, then, it may be noted, is one of the great dangers that beset the budding stylist; and when a composer finds himself obsessed by certain of his own turns and phrases,

so that he can never "think" musically without these used-up ideas immediately intruding themselves upon him and refusing to retire, then it is best for him to force himself to undertake an entirely new branch of composition to that which he has been doing before, and in this way compel himself to emerge from the groove so fatal to progress.

CHAPTER IV

THE FACULTY OF UNLEARNING

IN one of the books of that remarkable mathematician, Mr C. H. Hinton, we are confronted with a character, whose vocation, to say the least, was one of the most uncommon; for this character bore on the door-plate of his somewhat dingy lodging, the words: "Mr Smith, Unlearner." And the fictitious narrator of this fact, who, in his wanderings, chanced upon this door-plate proclamation of so strange a professorship, after having smiled at first at the foolishness which it seemed to indicate, began, later on, to perceive a sense creeping over him, which prompted an attitude other than mere facetiousness; "a sense" (to use his own words) "of how much I should owe to any one who would rid me of what I had learned at college—that plastering over of the face of Nature; that series of tricks and devices whereby they teach a man knowing nothing of reality, to talk of it as if he did." And whether we, on our parts, are tempted to smile or not, this is a question of whether we

are confirmed smilers at everything a trifle fantastic, exotic, or everything not offensively transparent.

All the same, smile or no smile on our parts, I contend that unlearning is one of the most important and difficult faculties for every creator to acquire, because, although it is tolerably easy to learn, yet to unlearn, it requires almost a genius: and certainly it requires an unlearner to create a genius. I should almost be inclined to say that the man of genius is invariably a greater hand at unlearning than at learning; nay, some geniuses have hardly learnt at all in the usually accepted sense of the word; they have been unlearners from their cradles.

We must, however, adopt a little explicitness in this matter, lest we be merely put down as paradox-mongers and lovers of fancy words, and to begin with, we must not forget that there are certain things called "habits"; and the unlearning of these habits—perhaps even if they be good ones—becomes a matter of paramount strenuousness. We are, in fact, slaves to our good habits as much as we are to our bad ones; for, to take an instance, if through some perversion of domestic circumstances a man is forced to forego his customary cold bath in the morning, he declares that this sin of omission is enough to render him uncomfortable for the rest of the day. To state that we are creatures of habit, however,

is to state a very old and obvious fact ; and that it requires an exceedingly fertile mind not to be so, this is a concomitant corollary wellnigh as obvious ; though the fact itself—the finding of that fertile mind—is very rare. Now, I have said that the art of unlearning (and this means the art of overcoming one's habits in a certain direction) is one of the most important factors in the constituting of a genius or stylist. It is, namely, the function of genius to overcome or unlearn the "prejudices of the previous philosophers," or, to adjust that phrase to our particular meaning, to unlearn the prejudices of the previous musicians, since this overcoming is not only a prerequisite to all really valuable composing, but also to all criticism. We have, no doubt, learnt a great deal from the ancients and from our mentors—in spite of Thoreau's statement that he had lived some thirty years on this planet and had not heard the first syllable of valuable advice from his seniors—but with all that we have learned from them, one thing they have not taught most of us, and that is to unlearn it ; and whether they were too vain to admonish us to "forget," or whether their perspicacity was not great enough to know that forgetfulness in this connection was a virtue, such a problem I cannot answer. I can only hint that perhaps a faint adumbration of both motives was the cause of their omission. In fact (and this time I am

with Thoreau in his saying, "old deeds for old people and new deeds for new"), these old deeds are only valuable when we learn them, and then learn to unlearn them afterwards; when we imbibe their juice, and then throw away the skins, so to speak; for as soon as we cling to the husks of our learning, we are lost in mediocrity. In our student days we were taught to write Sonatas like Beethoven and Fugues like Bach; but when we left our respective colleges and conservatoires we taught ourselves to unlearn all that—and if we could not, then we had failed. This writing, *à la* Bach, Beethoven, or Brahms, had become a habit, and we had not the will strong enough to become our own "habitless" selves, or, at least, to make new habits; we had not the brimstone and treacle to purge us of our good habits, our alert and nervous searching after fifths and false relations and all the other harmonical misdemeanours so severely punished by our many and grave pedagogues. Indeed, I place all rules we learn on the same footing as I place the gymnastics of the would-be warrior; in real warfare they are useless, since the army that stood merely touching its toes with its fingers would soon be annihilated by the more deadly tactics of the opposing hosts.

It is a fact, almost a truism, among enlightened musicians, that we learn the rules only in order

to know how to break them ; but the real quarrel arises in how often and how far one is permitted to break them. The truth is, *in reality there are no rules*, there are merely *conventions* ; and those conventions have altered with the advent of each new Master. Hence, what the would-be great composer has got to unlearn (having once learnt it) is the method of his forerunners, not *rules* in the sense they are usually understood. Music is more ruleless than any other art, because it has no connection with matter or material expression. The painter cannot merely paint ; he has to paint something. The poet cannot merely indulge in melodious utterance ; he has to make utterance about something. The architect cannot merely build ; he has to build a habitable house. But the musician, he has merely to compose ; his speech is a soul-speech belonging to another plane, which carries not with it the limitations of this material world, and, for this reason, its so-called rules are more transient, perhaps, than any of the other arts.

If the adamant power of originality asserts itself in the soul of the genius, no petty pre-existent rules can hold him back, for from this moment he makes, as it were, a new rule. As Edward Dowden puts it in his admirable work on Shakespeare—"In due time we fling away our manuals, our codes of spiritual drill, our little rules and restrictions. A deeper order

takes authority over our being, and resumes in itself the narrower order; the rhythm of our life acquires a larger harmony, a movement free and yet sure as that of Nature." And as to these new laws, the explanation and also the justification thereof, that is left to the pundits and to those whom a somewhat bitter philosopher has termed "learned idlers."

CHAPTER V

INTELLECT AND SIMPLICITY

THERE is an element in music which a certain type of listener designates sensationalism, and this sensationalism is placed by the particular type in question as a species of satanic entity against what they call "the real thing" — namely, intellectualism. One hears old-fashioned music-lovers extol Beethoven because of his "wonderful intellect," as they put it, and proceed to condemn Wagner or Strauss because these two more modern composers are what they call sensational, implying thereby that they both lack intellect. But the truth is, there is as much intellect in Wagner or Strauss as in Beethoven; but, the modernity having worn off this earlier Master, his intellectuality, denuded of all its veilings, becomes the more easily perceptible, and that alone constitutes the difference.

Now, it is fairly evident that the function of music is not to be merely intellectual, any more than it is to be merely sensuous, although undoubtedly the intellect is an essential feature in

the man who creates music, just as intellect was an essential feature in the architect who planned Cologne Cathedral, but the Cathedral itself is not intellectual, so to speak. We should, indeed, be regarded as somewhat unappreciative of architecture if, on standing before that colossal building, we were merely to say, "How intellectual!" It is, in fact, the very last word we should use, for does it not infer something too inherently frigid or calculating; something on a lower plane to the spiritual sensation we at that moment should be experiencing? And thus it is also with music: to the making thereof, intellect is necessary, but music itself is not intellectual—it is something more; something which in its intensity outshines the intellect: its effect, indeed, ought to hide all the means which went to produce that effect; and if this be not so, there is something lacking.

In witnessing, for example, some wondrous scenic display, whereunto are essential countless intricate mechanisms behind the stage, one would, to say the least, have somewhat missed the point if, instead of entirely giving oneself up to the beauties disclosing themselves before one's eyes, the mind was centred on that labyrinth of wires and electrical contrivances hidden behind the scenes. Should we not, in such a case, be catching on to the last straw almost, to save us from utter tedium? Would there either not be

any real beauty unfolding itself before us, or should we not be utterly blind to it, if it *did* exist at all? And I fear with music it is often so as well. When our interest becomes a purely intellectual one, it shows that either in the particular work we are confronted with, no more entrancing, uplifting loveliness exists, or, if not that, if in some work of bygone period this loveliness ever existed at all, then the cruel hand of Time has ruthlessly effaced it, and left us nought but the cold manifestation of its skeleton; left us to say nothing but "How well it is made; how intellectual!" Or, again, if that greater delight should exist, might we not be entirely blind to it, as some people are blind to the oceanic grandeur of Bach, in whom they likewise see but the intellectual, and nothing beyond?

It is true, however, that sometimes this "intellectualism" may help towards the "life" of a musical creation; help it to live across the years in a way which otherwise were impossible, for it is a sad fact that, as Carlyle says of poets, "most of them are very soon forgotten." "Yea," he continues, "not the noblest Shakespeare or Homer of them can be remembered *for ever*; a day comes when he, too, is not!" Dyspeptic pessimism, it may be urged; but will such a shallow exclamation get rid of facts?

The festival which took place a few years ago for one of the most illustrious tone-poets,

Beethoven, was a dead failure, even though conducted by such a celebrated conductor as Weingartner; and yet, had that festival been composed of the works of Richard Wagner instead, I hardly think we need trouble to doubt whether the hall would not have been crowded to overflowing. Beethoven, alas! for many, has become merely an intellectual pleasure, while Wagner retains still that elevated sensuousness and all-thrilling rapture essential to the full and profoundest appreciation of music. And so, after all is said, Carlyle may be partially right, however unpleasant his statement to us may be; and he may be so because, undoubtedly, to a certain extent, a new thing kills an old one. The tremendous popularity which a newly deceased or an arisen star gains for himself has a deeper significance than the mere fact that he is dead; for in some cases he is quite far from his death when this immense popularity sets in. Sympathy, however beautiful and laudable a quality it may be, is not enough to make people put their hands very deep into their often impecunious pockets, and, having done so, buy an evening of boredom into the bargain. The stalls and boxes may be places of boredom and snobbery, but the all-too-expensive yet overcrowded gallery is a place of a very different nature; a place where either boredom, snobbery, or that sympathy which renders falsely famous.

were counted too expensive an amusement for those impoverished mortals who frequent it night after night when the Wagnerian Cycle is being performed.

In truth, then, this immense admiration which people entertain for the newest genius is really genuine and deep-rooted, and it is so because underneath it all lies a much less simple reason than mere sympathy—not one reason, but a plurality of reasons; the first, and also the most obvious being a craving for a new spiritual sensation (if this paradoxical conjunction of words be permitted), a desire that all one's faculties should be satisfied at one and the same time.

For great music must hold within it the capacity to awaken a number of attributes in the listeners' minds, and even the spirit of curiosity must not be omitted. As stated in our first chapter, only the indolent "classical" type of mentality desires the expected; the intrinsically musical person demands a certain flavour of the *unexpected* as a prerequisite to enjoyment, for unexpectancy is an essential feature to pleasurable activity, in that it keeps the mind concentrated; and we may say this mental activity is a healthy attribute of youth, and begins, as a rule, to show decline after maturity has been reached, as may be noted through the fact that old people like "old" music, whereas younger people show a greater preference

for new. Thus the aged often like the Classics because they can understand them with ease, but the youthful often dislike the Classics because they can understand them with too much ease, and to understand a thing too well is to feel tedium. Only the middle course in matters of comprehension can, therefore, be the pleasurable one, since too ready a comprehension awakens as much tedium as no comprehension at all. If certain of the "moderns" entertain an aversion to Mozart and Beethoven, it is because these composers strike them as sounding somewhat childish and obvious, however horrifying this statement may seem to the orthodox. For after the complexities of Wagner and Strauss, there is no gainsaying the fact that Beethoven and Mozart are apt to sound attenuated; the disadvantage of one great art succeeding another being that the latter all too often renders the former too easy of comprehension. As the advance of music must cause a corresponding advance in the minds of its listeners, so the intellectuality of one generation must become the simplicity of the next—a thing unavoidable at certain periods of musical history.

To suppose a thing of beauty is invariably a joy for ever is, therefore, to suppose a fallacy, since facts disprove the statement: indeed, it is an open question whether a thing of beauty remains even beautiful for ever, seeing that, as

with intellect and simplicity, the beauty of one age often becomes the banality of the next. Is not the greater part of the work of Handel, for instance, as unhearable nowadays as the greater part of Wordsworth is unreadable; for where is the serious-minded musician to be found who would subject himself to a hearing of the *Messiah*? And yet, undoubtedly, at one time the *Messiah* was a thing of beauty, and possibly also of intellectual complexity. Even Mozart, who sounds perhaps to our modern ears simpler still than Handel, was not only devoid of obviousness in his day, but was the target for accusations composed of such epithets as "melodious," "discordant," and others of a like nature, showing that his contemporaries failed to comprehend him.

And to what does all this lead? Why, to the saddening reflection that music is a more ephemeral art than literature; that it is apt to become antiquated in a distressingly short time, the reason being that music is composed entirely of form, and hence fails to appeal when that form has lost its attraction. Poetry, on the other hand, is composed of both form *and* meaning, so that when the former has grown antiquated, the latter still remains, and if of intrinsic value, will remain, in a sense, for ever. As Truth does not alter, but only the method by which it is expressed, then the combination of youth

and its expression must engender a twofold appeal: and thus much of the poetry and literature of a given epoch endures, long after its music has faded into oblivion. Has not, for instance, Plato withstood the passing of time, while the "beautiful music" eulogised in his works has faded into oblivion? And may not the same also be said of Shakespeare, whose admiration for music was so great that he denounced, with crushing epithets, all human beings who "possessed no music in their souls"? For, in spite of what may be said to the contrary, music is *not* a modern art, and, therefore, the supposition that in Shakespeare's day there existed no composers worthy of immortality can hardly be held as correct: the blame is far more likely to be with music itself than with the Shakespearean musicians. If music be a modern art, it is only so in the sense of change, and not in the sense of existence; that is to say—to put it bluntly—it has increased in loudness and number of performers, but that does not of necessity make it more complex, nor imply that all music previous to Bach was in its infancy. Indian music, with its demi-semitones, is quite as complex after its own manner as the music of the Occident, and even the complexities of the latter are fluctuating, Mōzart, who came after Bach, being simpler than Bach, and Ravel being simpler than Wagner.

And this brings me to say a word about simplicity as a virtue in itself. How often do we not hear the phrase, "It is so beautiful, *because* so simple," as if simplicity were the cause of beauty — instead of, occasionally, the accident of it. Indeed, the phrase is merely one of those many catch-phrases which acquire plausibility through the frequency of usage, and, far from being true, are easily shown to be false. If simplicity itself were an attribute of, and a prerequisite to great art, then a nursery rhyme would be of more value than a Shakespearean play, and the verse beginning "Mary had a little lamb" would be more beautiful than any speech of Hamlet. In fact, one might go so far as to say that simplicity does not exist as a thing in itself, but merely as a conception in people's minds. The most homely flower or the smallest insect is of an undreamt-of complexity, being a mass of detail too minute to be perceptible to the human eye, and possibly to the human intelligence. Admitted, however, that simplicity exists as a conception—a necessary concession for working purposes—when that conception can be applied to certain phases of art, then the transience of those phases may be regarded as imminent.

Especially is this the case with music, as may be gathered from the fate of such composers as Donizetti, whose simplicity, rather than any

absence of novelty, was the cause of their transience. If we remember that much of Donizetti's music consisted merely of a melody and an accompaniment, we can at once realise why he no longer appeals to us—for he does not afford sufficient material to occupy the mind; in a word, he is too simple. There are, however, two forms of simplicity, the pseudo and the real—real being used, of course, in a comparative sense, remembering what we have already maintained. Now, pseudo-simplicity is one of those phases which art manifests from time to time, especially poetry, but which is the outcome in reality (if it be of any value) of a process in the poet's mind which is anything but simple. As any poet knows (and having written several volumes of verse myself, I, too, can speak from experience), the difficulty of achieving an effect of simplicity—an effect brought about by the use of short lines and the attempt to produce things of deep import in a small space, so to speak—is very considerable. Moreover, that effect is often not worth the trouble spent to achieve it, this mock simplicity being apt to blind the reader to the far from simple meaning which it embodies: a fact which can be gleaned from a careful perusal of William Blake. Indeed, as in his case, simplicity, to be of real value, must either possess at the back of it a deep allegorical meaning, or else be the outcome of an extreme

concentratedness. Failing these, it becomes mere triviality, which cannot outlive a few years. Such is the position of poetry then, but music, being entirely dependent on form, and permitting of no allegorical meaning to prop itself against, is in a different position altogether. Musical simplicity, in fact, is usually achieved by dispensing with polyphony or harmonic invention; the inevitable result on the listeners being that form of tedium which arises from too easy a comprehension. Thus, if simple music endures, it only does so in a spasmodic manner, slumbering for many years after its birth until reawakened from oblivion; for its enjoyment depends entirely on its mere novelty of sound. At its birth it is enjoyable because of its newness, which is best described by the word "quaint." In fine, let a thing of art grow old enough, and it becomes new, though it often requires a little doctoring, as Scarlatti's has done, and as, I make so bold to say, Mozart and Beethoven will do at some future date. I have treated of this matter, however, in my chapter headed "The Law of Recurrence," the perusal of which will bring the fact to notice that not only are composers tinctured with simplicity subject to periods of oblivion, but others as well—for no less a genius than Bach was at one time forgotten.

It will have been seen, then, after the foregoing, that the application of both "simple" and

“intellectual” to music is subject to misconception ; indeed, these words are bandied about as mere conveniences of speech, but with a very unclear one as to their real meaning. Thus, the classicist who turns from Strauss to Beethoven for intellectuality is really turning to him for comparative simplicity, and he who turns from the supposedly sensational is in reality turning from the comparatively intellectual : and yet it is evident that the great artist should awaken no desire in his contemplators to turn away for this or that element—for the versatile genius supplies every demand that is essential to true enjoyment, not omitting even simplicity as a device to ensure contrast. One thing, however, is certain—namely, the most potent music must be exaltedly emotional before everything else, and although it should contain intellect, yet, at the same time, it should be beyond it, as the sky is beyond the clouds which are contained in its blue infinity.

CHAPTER VI

MUSICAL EXPRESSIBILITY

WE have pointed out that music is more ruleless, or rather less restricted, than any of the other arts, because it has in no sense a material basis; and that being so, we are constrained to ask ourselves how this fact agrees with its power to express things either abstract or physical, and whether that power be an illusion or a reality. This question becomes one, in fact, of extreme difficulty to solve, and rather than dogmatise we prefer to review the speculations on the subject, for they are many and varied, a philosopher so far back as Aristotle already having set the problem in motion.

Now, I once came across a man who rather wittily remarked that there was no more moonlight in the *Moonlight Sonata* than there was sunlight in Sunlight Soap: and in the face of all the modern tendencies to stretch the expressibility of music to its utmost limit, one is bound to doubt—if one weighs the “pros” and “cons” of the matter—whether the program-mists are pursuing methods consistent with

musical truth at all, and to ask oneself if Aristotle was not correct after all when he stated that "Music expresses nothing but itself."

The problem, in fact, is worthy of being looked into, and to begin with, it is essential to enlarge our perception as to how music lies in its relationship to all the other arts; for as to these, it indeed bears towards them a unique position. Presuming that Aristotle is right, and that music expresses really nothing but itself, at any rate the same cannot be maintained of painting and sculpture, since these must inevitably portray some things physical and material, however remote and ideal that portrayal may be. And this, although to a less extent, applies to poetry as well; for in spite of its frequent dealings with things abstract and spiritual, yet in that it uses words, it uses something definite, and in so far material. It is, in short, subject to limitations which, if discarded, would lead it into the realm of nonsense, and nowhere beyond.

True it is, however, that poets allow themselves licences with regard to the exact meanings of words, just as philosophers very frequently do: yet it can only be with those words whose meanings in any case are somewhat elastic or very widely embracing. For a poet, as an instance, to use the word "forest," and by that word to mean a region where there are no trees,

such a thing would be inconceivable and absurd : he might imply a celestial forest, or a dead one, or a buried one, but there the matter would end—since a word must denote a certain limitation. But with music this is by no means the case : a sound, unless it be purely imitative, portrays nothing ; it may undoubtedly awaken certain feelings in the listeners' breasts ; it may engender a sensation of boredom or of delight : but that is an entirely different matter from inherently expressing boredom or delight. The word "rapture" denotes rapture, but it may awaken a great despair in the man who reads it—for he may become conscious of how very far from rapturous he himself is feeling at the moment. Likewise the word "death" not only means cessation from terrestrial existence, but also the very quintessence of dolefulness—and yet, if this word be perused by the unloving but expectant relation of the person who happens to be dead, it might awaken within his expectant heart a thrill of considerable elation.

To engender a feeling, then, is quite different from expressing it : and again, to have certain emotions associated with a thing, is surely not to express that thing either : wine does not express the maudlin, hilarious, visionary or soporific states of mind it may call forth in the mortal who partakes too lavishly of its allurements. Wine is nothing but wine : wine

expresses nothing but wine ; and as to whether it causes one person to sink to sleep gradually underneath the table, or another person, metaphorically speaking, to wake up more than under ordinary circumstances he ever could wake up—well, that has, as far as this argument is concerned, nothing to do with the matter. Moreover—to revert to music—if it really gave definite expression to that overpowering despair and melancholy, which not a few writers have read into the last movement of Tschaikowski's *Sixth Symphony*, for example, would not every compassionate eye in the whole auditorium be suffused with tears ; and would not, at any rate, sensitive natures think twice before submitting their delicate constitutions to such a highly affecting and heart-rending ordeal ? To witness real and overpowering despair, when all is said, cannot even to the most hard of heart be exactly a pleasant thing ; and although I am aware that there are certain persons who visit the theatres in order, as they put it, “to enjoy a good cry,” yet fact goes to prove that even should they visit the concert halls with the same purpose, their expectations would remain hopelessly and assuredly unfulfilled—sniffing, unless caused by a cold in the head, being a distinctly rare occurrence in the concert hall.

But it may be asked, in contention to the horrible blasphemy of Aristotle which I have

quoted, "If music then expresses nothing, how has such a very reverse idea come into existence, and what about Symphonic Poems and Programme Composers?" And here these supposed interrogators must not forget the remotely imitative faculties of certain forms of music: they must not forget that certain chromatic and long-drawn string passages are something suggestive of a wail, and that it would be unusual to dissociate a wail from distress. This being the case, it requires but a step further to arrange a system, which, however remotely and falsely, shall express everything from a lamb's bleat to a cyclone. It is, in fact, perfectly conceivable that music—as a few thinkers have already contended—began with certain imitations, just as poetry is said to have originated in exclamations. To mimic the bird's song, for instance, was to produce a lively strain; to mimic a moan of distress, was to produce a plaintive strain, and so forth, until the wind and other mightier elements in Nature came to be imitated as well—and until (what is more important to our subject) music passed almost entirely beyond the scope of mere imitation, and became *Itself*. And yet, after all these centuries of evolution, people seem to think that they are paying a musical composition the highest compliment when they, as it were, banish it back to its

first primitive beginnings; when they, in fact, tell its embarrassed composer how they are reminded of birds and cascades and rustling tree-tops, and what not—all very arcadian and rural, it is true—but did the particular composer happen to think of these when he wrote his *Fantasy*, or whatever it might be? Is it not conceivable that he might considerably dismay his admiring commentators by replying that there was nothing further from his mind at the time than tree-tops and the like?—for the singing birds were the united merriment of mother and first-born, the cascades were the gurgling of Baby's evening bottle, and the rustling tree-tops — well, those he could not place at all.

Let it not be supposed, however, that I wish to fall into the error of musical intolerance, and that I would add to the general whoop and cry with regard to Programme-music. My aim is not to condemn that form of musical composition, but to show, for purposes which shall be revealed anon, that music does not truly and actually express, beyond the few things that it really can mimic, those which many *littérateurs* and musicians would fain make it express. Indeed, even in the comparatively few imitative things, would not the listeners go very far astray if there were no text-books to keep them in the right path? And are there not likely to be many

uninitiated mortals, like the two ladies I heard of, who, when listening to the sheep-bleating variation in *Don Quixote*, felt quite sympathetic for the conductor on account of the extreme annoyance he must have been feeling; the annoyance arising from the fact (as they supposed) that the whole orchestra had "got out." Furthermore, admitted that music can be made to resemble the bleating of lambs, and so forth, could it be said that on such occasions it rises to its highest flights of beauty? Can the cuckoo-call in Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* be regarded as one of that composer's most sublime moments? And would Dr Richard Strauss be flattered if one told him that the sheep-bleating variation in *Don Quixote*, which so puzzled the two ladies, was the finest thing he ever penned? And yet, if the criterion of good art consists, as Shakespeare unfortunately remarked, in its true-ness to Nature, he certainly ought to be: for, in spite of the two ladies, never has he been truer to Nature before or since, to my knowledge at any rate.

However, be that as it may, I think it must be fairly obvious to every upright thinker that beyond the limits of all things possible to imitate by sound, music ceases to express actually and truly anything but itself. To make it express such a thing as Love, for instance, may be all very well from the composer's point of view, and

indeed highly elevating and entrancing from the listener's, too, but from the sane, cold-blooded attitude of logic, it is merely an absurdity. If, as I have attempted to show, music can express only what it can mimic, how can an abstract, soundless thing like Love be expressed by a noise? One might almost as well try to express hatred by a perfume. Nay, the very fact that two people may glean two absolutely different meanings out of one piece of music; that whereas one person may have imagined a storm, merely of wind, and another a storm of romantic passion, and a third, nothing material whatever, this is surely enough to prove that the medium which is *supposed* to express these things, does not, in reality, do so after all.

But there is still another aspect of music to consider in this connection; there is that point of view which, I believe, originated in the mind of a great man—namely, that music expresses the Inexpressible: and, like most paradoxes, but by no means all, it is both true and untrue. For our purpose, however, I must first dwell on, and emphasise, that side which is untrue. And to begin with, I am inclined to say of the Inexpressible what Edward Carpenter so wittily said of astronomy: for, to use his own words, "Astronomy is (regarded as) the most perfect science, *because we know least about it*"—because our ignorance of the actual phenomena is the

most profound; and although many of us may be highly incensed at this apparent slight on such a study as astronomical science, yet we are bound to admit that when it comes to the *inexpressible*, the ignorance of most of us is undoubtedly most profound, if not *quite* so. Nor does this similitude end here, since not only are we ignorant of the actual phenomena of this Inexpressible, but we want to express it by a medium which expresses nothing but itself: by the combination of two negatives, in fact, we are giving birth to a positive, which is impossible. In truth, we can with no real justification say that music expresses the "inexpressible," since, in the first place, we do not know what music really does express, and in the second, as aforesaid, we assuredly do not know the "inexpressible." But what we *can* say, is, that music may perhaps express certain things out of the myriads and myriads which go to make up that vast unfathomable region of thought which we call the Inexpressible: and beyond that we certainly are not justified in going.

And yet, in emphasising what I have urged as the untrue side of this conception, does not the fault arise, perhaps, merely in that difference, already alluded to, between expressing a thing and engendering a certain feeling? For it is undoubtedly true that music often gives rise to a sensation which is entirely inexpressible, and

which, perhaps, no other medium could call forth. As far as music itself is concerned, it cannot signify whether its votaries write symphonic poems, or wish to express the inexpressible, or nothing at all but pure sound for sound's sake, as long as they give real intrinsic pleasure to their listeners and, above all, produce a work of art. Theories, however true or false, do not change a thing; the explanation which may be advanced to account for this or that cannot persuade the stars to move one inch from their courses, or the tide politely to refrain from wetting the feet of Canute: for the explanation is made to suit the fact, and not the fact to suit the explanation.

With regard to the theory which lies at the basis of the whole Programme-system, although with the lesser lights it may on the one hand often stand as an excuse for barren and uninspired ugliness, yet on the other, if it also gives us such sublimities as the Prelude to *Tristan and Isolde*, or the conclusion of *Tod und Verklärung*, well, we can afford to take the evil with the good, and forgive it all its transgressions. That certain composers find a stimulus to their creative faculties in a material or abstract idea, and by its translation, however wrongly, into music engender beauties which otherwise they might not have been able to engender, this is quite enough, in one sense, to justify the system.

Moreover, a system which so many musicians have at times adopted must have something considerable in its favour, and its evil side could easily be mitigated if its votaries would select exalted and abstract subjects, in place of those sordid and grotesque ones, necessitating sundry subterranean gruntings and bass-tubal uglinesses, meant no doubt as a hair-stimulant, in the way of making it stand on end, but most often resulting only in a stimulant for the risible muscles instead.

Indeed—if one takes into account all the aforementioned things—it is almost self-evident that music (with certain exceptions, principally to be found in Wagner) is at its highest artistic pinnacle when furthest from the plain of mimicry, and the reason lies in the fact that on those occasions it is more truly and intrinsically itself; it is, in fact, entirely unfettered by the material element, and—if one wishes to put it in that way—it has passed on to the plane of the inexpressible; the word “inexpressible” here meaning that which is not expressible by any other medium *but* music. In short, the whole thing comes back to the phrase of Aristotle—“Music expresses nothing but itself.”

CHAPTER VII

FORM AND EVOLUTION

THERE is a good deal of talk about the evolution of form, as if it had to do with a kind of survival of the fittest, or a sort of environmental chance, which, placing composers amid a certain conglomeration of rules, moulds them into what they become, the rules making the composers, and not the composers the rules: and, in order to contest this cart-before-horse mode of looking at the matter, I would cite a phrase often cited by biologists—namely, that “Function precedes organisation,” and by this is meant that the rudimentary animal is sensitive to light before it grows an eye; that mankind amuses itself before it invents playthings to amuse itself with; or, to bring the example to the realm of music, that the musician has something to express before he makes rules (I use the word for sake of convenience) to express it with. And when I bring this into our own art, I do so because, on the broadest lines, those fundamental laws which obtain in one aspect of Nature obtain also in

others; and where there is any difference, it lies in the details, and not in the law itself.

To say, then, that form evolves, as if its evolution were the outcome almost of chance, instead of the outcome of the composer's mind, is equivalent to saying that "organisation precedes function," and cannot hold good—first, as already stated, because it would be contrary to the broad laws of Nature; and, second, because fact goes to disprove this statement; and, in furtherance of this view, let us give an example from Beethoven, since it was he who introduced an innovation in Sonata-form which the slow process of evolution would have taken centuries to bring about; and that was in connection with the episode between the first subject and the second. In fact, to the great horror of his pedantic contemporaries, Beethoven, instead of coming to a full stop or semicolon, or whatever name one can call it to make it intelligible both to musicians and laymen—instead of coming to any kind of break, Beethoven went straight into his second subject, and not only that, but his music is still existent to-day. Moreover, not merely is it still existent, but on this "transgression" of Beethoven has been built the Sonata-form of the present academics, the form which stands, according to them, as the immaculate model for all composers and, I believe, some people would say, for all times. Thus in the face of this fact I

ask, Can anybody, endowed with intellectual uprightness, state that Sonata-form evolved ; that it was, so to speak, already there, moulded by the hand of Time, and was only waiting for the composer to come and compose in it? If there is any question of growth or evolution in the matter, that evolution was in the musician, and not in the form. It is not that one objects to the word growth, or evolution in itself, but one objects to the many things that it implies, the most baneful being what is regarded as its infallibility. There is, in fact, a kind of veneration attached to a gradually evolved thing, which manifests itself in the apprehension lest any change should occur ; lest this beautiful thing, which had taken so many years to become what it now is, should be altered in any way ; as if evolution and alteration were not inseparable ! To talk of gradual growth, with regard to Sonata-form, may be true in one sense but untrue in another, since it overlooks just that difference which exists between what Walt Whitman has termed "exfoliation" and the ordinary Darwinian theory, the difference existing in "desire" or "will." Or, to put it differently, that the will to change is a conscious will, a premeditated one on the part of the composer (for when we talk of premeditation we have, of course, left the plane of protoplasm) to alter existing conventions to suit his Muse,

instead of cramping his Muse to coincide with existent conventions.

But it is perhaps insufficient merely to give one example in this matter—even if that example be taken from such a universally recognised genius as Beethoven. Let us then turn for another to the operatic world, and contemplate Richard Wagner and the enormous revolution he brought about. Indeed, if anything had been consciously and premeditatingly formed, in contradiction to “gradually evolved,” it is the Opera of To-day; that being entirely the invention of Richard Wagner: and just as it is inconceivable that any composer worthy of his name should go back and write in the Sonata-form of Mozart, so is it equally inconceivable that any self-respecting operatic composer should return to the old-fashioned Opera-form, with its arias and recitatives, and the objectionable hiatus inevitably yawning between each. And yet this is not all that Wagner furnishes us with to emphasise my point of view,—for not only did he rid the world of the patchwork opera system—if I may be excused the remark—not only did he establish absolute continuity,—but he introduced the *leitmotiv*—and hence invented a new form in a twofold way. That absolute musical continuity without the *leitmotiv* were an impossibility—this is an opposing fact, no doubt, many will urge—but if they will reflect for a

moment, they may perhaps come to see their mistake, for it were quite conceivable to make a sort of episode between each chorus and aria, as the case might be, and gradually, with slight preludings, to glide in a smooth and imperceptible manner from one part to the other. It is, of course, true that in certain of the older operas there is no actual cessation of the music always, but it is very evident that in given places "here something ends and another thing begins," so to speak, which, after all, is nearly, if not quite, as bad.

For the Opera-form of to-day, then, we have to thank Wagner, and only Wagner; yet if three hundred years go by without any very radical modification taking place therein, is it not likely that people will talk of its "growth," as if on that account it ought never to be changed again, or discarded for other forms? May we not augur that with the Opera-form will occur exactly what occurred with the Beethoven-Sonata-form, and that instead of improving, enlarging, and really developing, we shall be expected to wrap it in a napkin and wait till the Day of Resurrection in order to hand it over, unsoiled and untouched, to its illustrious inventor?

But leaving that possibility aside, one matter becomes evident—namely, that a form is an unstable and metamorphic thing—and that having been changed once, it will be changed

again, and its change will indicate the advent of a new Light, as I have already said, though in a slightly different way; and to further illustrate this, let us leave the more complicated region of Form and turn, for example, to a more primitive but seemingly essential thing—Key. Let us, in fact, bear in mind how often in the annals of history the scale of eight notes has changed: how at one period such and such a mode was in vogue, how at another, quite a different one, and how in the present day we often use more than one, while there are certain people who talk of using none at all. Indeed, the many modifications which those eight notes have been subjected to since antiquity is only a very emphatic and clear prophecy of how many more they will be subjected to in the future; in truth, is not the eternal law, “change, always change?” and therefore to worship a tradition or a convention because it is old, because it has existed for a great number of years, is to adopt verily a false form of adoration, since, concomitant with the thriving of a tradition, is the deplorable fact that no one great enough has arisen to overthrow it. Tradition means a dearth of greatness, a dearth of noble individuality; to follow in its footsteps means to be too lazy or weak mentally to think, or create something for oneself: for just as with mankind it is a sign of the late autumn of life to live in the past, and when this becomes

a feature in man's terrestrial existence one sees in it the decline of life, so it is with those who adhere to the ancient conventions and traditions. The young, the healthy and the strong, these live in the Present or in the Future, these look ahead ; for to look back is to be turned into the pillar of salt, and intellectually to die.

CHAPTER VIII

PRESENT-DAY CHANGES

I HAVE alluded to the matter of evolution, or rather non-evolution, in my last chapter, because I wish to justify the changes modern composers are making, and attempt to show they are not so blasphemous or illogical as many people seem to think. If those of the past have deliberately made changes in musical form, why should not those of the present or future do so too? There is no reasonable argument against this.

And what are these great present-day changes? Take, to begin with, the question of a melody, how at one time it extended over a few bars and then came to a close, being, as it were, a kind of sentence, which, after running for the moment, arrived at a full stop, or semicolon. Take this and compare with it the modern tendency: for that modern tendency is to argue that a melody might go on indefinitely almost; there is no reason why it should come to a full stop, for it is not a sentence, but more a line, which, like the rambling incurvations of a frieze, requires no

rule to stop it, but alone the will and taste of its engenderer. Then take again the question of key, of tonality. At one time every composer, as all know, wrote in a certain key, only wandering from that key within a certain limited area, and always returning to that key at the end of his composition. Yet nowadays we ask ourselves: Why limit our inspiration by this hampering fetter of key? why have any key at all? or why not invent new scales, or regard the whole of tonality as chromatic? Thus some of us have abolished key - signature altogether, and have bid farewell to an old convention. Indeed, in the music of the past we can already see this tendency, and how the later composers have wandered farther and farther afield from the key in which they started out.

And yet, there are many who urge, If you start out in a key you must come back to it; you may wander away in the intervening time as much as you wish, but you must return to where you started, if you strive to be in any sense logical, masterly, artistic, and satisfying to your hearers: for the ear, having once got accustomed to a certain key at the beginning, cannot rest contented unless it hears that key once more at the end. That this is not true, however, can be shown by the fact that many ears, not too imbued with pre-existing conventions, *have* proved themselves perfectly contented under

such conditions, and that such a standpoint is neither logical nor specially artistic can easily be demonstrated. One might as well say that a business man starting out from the dingy regularity of a town (for a holiday), and arriving in the freedom of the meadows and mountains should, as a matter of artisticness and logic, return to that town; but, in fact, the most artistic, interesting, and romantic thing to do would be for him never to return to it, but die in ecstasy amid those beautiful meadows, or wander away into some new and entrancing fairyland. That he has to return is not specially an affair of logic, but of one of the misfortunes of everyday life and sordid money-making; a thing which is the antithesis to Art and Music.

Then to go on to the question of rhythm. Is it in any sense a pointless query to ask why we should be limited to that regularity, that unvarying three beats or four beats or six beats in a bar, when a much greater variety, so essential to the holding of the listeners' attention, could be gained by a constantly varying rhythm, or no definite rhythm at all? Surely it is no argument to say that, because for five hundred years a thing has existed in this or in that form, therefore it cannot be changed; for the answer would be, having existed so long in that form, it is time it should be changed, since either we are weary of it or have exhausted its possi-

bilities. That it finally became a necessity, this abolishment of rhythmic regularity, is self-evident from the fact that Scriabine, Percy Grainger, and Debussy in some of their later works have varied the rhythm in every bar, as well as using the unequal time-signatures in the bars themselves—a very significant point in musical evolution, though offering difficulties of performance which one must concede are not without drawbacks.

Then, finally, to come to the matter of *form*, already partially dealt with in the previous chapter, and here I mean what we may call the architectural side of composition, why should we endeavour to put new matter into old forms, as some people advocate, instead of creating new ones? If a so-called rule is so unstable a thing, and if music is freer from those limitations which compass them than other arts, then to wish to put new matter, so-called, into an old form, gives birth not only to an anachronism, so to put it, but is also likely to asphyxiate or considerably cramp the outflowing inspiration of the creator. That it *may* be possible to put new matter—and by this I mean, of course, melodies and harmonies—into an old form, one does not doubt; but when it comes to be regarded as a virtue, then the extreme danger appears, for this supposed prerequisite for greatness on the part of the academically-minded, this admiration for

mechanical adjustors and fitters of every musical, or rather unmusical, description, is on the high road to reduce music to the plane of mathematics, and to cause it to fall from the pinnacle of its artistic heights into the abyss of mere mechanism. To have certain very fixed and limited ideas about form, and should these ideas be not accurately subscribed to, to misname the musical composition, whatever it may be, as formless, this is an injustice, alone arising from pedantry and limitation. I put the question: Why should not the number of forms be as illimitable as the number of contents calculated to go inside those forms? And the answer can alone remain for time to show. Certain it is that at present, form and pattern are considerably confounded, in that, should the form of some work not be based on an old pattern, the entire work is regarded as formless; and it is against this exceedingly circumscribed point of view that much warfare indeed might be waged. Pattern and form are different things, and the greatest geniuses in music discard pattern and invent a new form, because their originality, their inventiveness, their absolute newness, transcends the limitations of the ancient patterns. These they have unlearned, and in their place have erected a new formal structure, to which as strict an adherence is often maintained as to those which have been discarded. The overthrow of the laws formulated

\

by preceding musicians merely means the birth of new ones, because lawlessness and genius only go hand-in-hand in one sense, and that is in the sense of pre-existing laws. Whether the new "rules" which the composer engenders for himself are at first apparent to the listener, is another matter. It is more than likely that they are far from being so. As in other domains of mental activity people talk of the supernatural, or the impossible, or the contrariness to the laws of Nature, merely because there may be laws which they are ignorant of, so in music do people talk of formlessness and anarchy as soon as the structural design is not founded on a hackneyed one, or is not blatantly transparent. The form of an ocean and the form of a tree are two vastly different things, and yet both have undoubtedly got form; just as the rambling incurvations of a frieze and the "Venus of Milo" are likewise diverse in the largest degree, although both possess formal characteristics. Structure, then, is not good or bad according to the pattern on which it is built, but alone according to its own intrinsic goodness or badness; the merit of the thing itself. And thus we require a different starting-point for criticism than as to whether a musical structure is like Sonata-form, Rondo-form; we require to ask, Does it flow, has it any real standpoint of its own, or is it a mere series of irritating and meaningless full

stops?—since nothing can be more aggravating than a continual coming to an end and a continual restarting. The decree of incessant flux (remember an ancient philosopher) is one which pervades the universe, and the grandiose rhythm of the ocean, or the babbling seductiveness of a rivulet, lies in its eternal continuity. Even prose, a thing to serve a definite purpose, is considerably augmented in value when the epithet “flowing” can be attached to it; and hence to talk of full stops or cadences in music, as if they were a quality and not merely a questionable convention, is to place that art on a par with one whose sole function is not to please the ear but to deal with definite symbols, often, alas! at the expense of gratifying that organ. We often extol prose when it becomes akin to music, and then we go and commit the error, however unconsciously, of extolling music when, with its semicolons and full stops, it becomes akin to prose, an absurdity which requires but little pointing out; for let it be well noted that in literature a full stop or any species of punctuation is a mute thing, a symbol unpronounced in the reading; but in music a close or a half-close means the irksome repetition of an exceedingly limited number of chords which, by their very frequent occurrence, not only show a lack of invention, but also obstruct the smooth flow of the work in question.

The modern tendency, then, is to invent new forms or structural designs, more subtle, more mystical, more flowing than heretofore; and if I have made no mention of modern harmony and polyphony, it is because we should involve ourselves in technicalities too complicated and perhaps too tedious to be of great value to us at the moment.

For the rest, I would add that, if the moderns seem to be drifting away from the great patterns of the previous Masters, instead of following in their footsteps, as so many think that they ought to do, and if, instead of adding my censure to such an apparently ungrateful proceeding, I have upheld them and vindicated them, then it is because there is another way, a more subtle way, yet an infinitely more heroic way, of following those Masters, and that is, not by closely and accurately following in their musical footprints, but in their psychological ones; by imitating, not their forms, but their courage, their creative enterprise, their will to give to the world something that has never been given before.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAW OF RECURRENCE

WE must not overlook the law of periodical recurrence in music, as I think it obtains in other arts. It must, indeed, not be supposed from what I have said in my last chapter, with regard to "radical changes," that when a mode of musical expression has been surpassed it is only fit for the waste-paper basket of oblivion; for this would be ignoring that law of periodical recurrence I have just alluded to. There come times when we are much nearer to the old, and also antique, than we are to the comparatively modern, and for that reason it will be seen that some old Master, long laid aside, is once more resurrected, and not only that, but echoes of his creative personality creep into modern work. Many musicians know that for a long time Johann Sebastian Bach was forgotten, and that it was Mendelssohn who resuscitated him; and as they know that, perhaps many have further observed how some of the moderns approach to that continual flow which is a characteristic of so

many of Bach's works, and how those moderns also approach to his polyphony, or many-partedness. Their flow itself is entirely different, but, nevertheless, it is very marked at certain moments; and not only that, but often the harmonies of Bach are unexpectedly modern, much more "discordant," so to speak, than any of the intervening Masters till Chopin.

Again, how often in modern music is there a flavour of very Early Church music (for instance, in Tschaikowski at times), savouring of a kind of musical Pre-Raphaelitism? The fact is, that when a thing is sufficiently old, its effect, on being resuscitated, is new again, so that, after all, a thing of beauty is a joy for ever in one sense. (I am compelled to contradict myself as it were, for nearly everything is both true and untrue; it depends with which phase of it we are dealing.) The Masters who are nearest to oblivion (if I may so put it) are those who are neither old nor new; and that is why, perhaps, a good many modernists have no sympathy for such truly great men as Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, and others, whereas nearly all are unanimous in appreciating Bach, and some have quite an unexpectedly pronounced admiration for Early Church music and folk-songs. This admiration is showing itself in their own musical creations. What a new and beautiful method of folk-song adaptation we find in the creations of that

remarkably inspired genius, Percy Grainger, whose admiration for those old forms has engendered such a rich harvest! Or to take painting: how strongly the flavour of the old Masters permeates the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood; or, to take an instance from poetry, is not Francis Thompson a new but, nevertheless, reincarnated Richard Crashaw?

And this brings us to one of the tendencies of the present time, namely the revival of old things of beauty placed in new surroundings. Now, although most tendencies have their justification and explanation—whether the latter be hidden or manifest—yet there is from certain quarters an outcry against this method of treating old masterpieces, which to the minds of many people seems merely productive of an anachronism, and that of a particularly displeasing type. And it was only recently, after my production of *Old Songs in New Guise*, that I came to see how strong this attitude appears to be with certain minds in connection with music—so strong, indeed, that I was even accused of “pulling the public’s leg” (to use a piece of slang), a procedure which might be amusing if art were merely a game, instead of a matter of paramount seriousness. The truth is, there is much more justification for setting new harmonies to old melodies than at first meets the eye, and it is in defence of this particular species of creative

activity that I would point out a few things which may help one or two music-lovers to appreciate what one might call a new art. For, judging from Percy Grainger,¹ he has created a method of treating old airs in a manner which may be varied, or even enlarged upon, by his followers for some time to come, thereby marking a distinct period in the history of music.

There are two ways of treating old airs from an accompanimental point of view, one being as great an anachronism (if we bring the idea into the matter at all) as the other. For we have, on the one hand, the method adopted by arrangers and editors, and that is, to write an accompaniment as unobtrusive and, unfortunately, at the same time as uninventive and dull, as possible; while, on the other hand, we have the method of *composers*, who endeavour to put as much of their creative capabilities into the framework of the particular air they have elected—or, we ought to say, felt inspired—to set, as their Muse or talent will allow them to do. But, to leave these last-mentioned aside for the moment and turn to the former, we find that nearly all arrangers (since for the sake of convenience we must so call them) do not adapt an accompaniment suitable to the particular period of the air in question, but

¹ Mr Grainger's activities in this direction are so epoch-making that my article on him has been added to this book (see Appendix II.).

(without knowing it, seemingly) manufacture an accompaniment which flavours more of watered Mendelssohn than of any other form of non-modernity. They forget that Mendelssohn is as much of an anachronism in connection with an old song as Debussy is — indeed, in some cases more so, since there are times as, for instance, in his *Sarabande*, when Debussy has a distinct flavour of the archaic, and is, therefore, nearer to the old than his predecessor; while Mendelssohn, in his non-Mendelssohnian moments only goes so far back as Sebastian Bach in retrograde flavour.

Now, for a thing to be productive of true artistic pleasure, it is not sufficient for it merely to be good in parts (the curate's egg and art being incompatible): it must, in truth, be all good. I am aware that a dull thing may have interesting moments, but in the setting of old songs the good and the bad are functioning simultaneously, the bad utterly spoiling the effect of the good. For, in many cases, the effect is like that of a beautiful melody being accompanied by a child playing five-finger exercises underneath it. That which is calculated to appear so unobtrusive becomes the very opposite by its excessive triviality. People forget that at the present day a melody in itself is not sufficient to hold the pleasurable attention of serious musicians. It may be sufficient to hold

the attention of the butcher's boy, but has no place in the concert hall. If this were not a fact, Donizetti would still be modern, or, at any rate, productive of pleasure instead of tedium, and Verdi would have been content to remain true to his "tunes," instead of ending his career with all the Wagnerian accessories.

But there are other points to be considered; historical points, in connection with very old melodies, which make the inventing of a new accompaniment to them not so questionable a procedure as many seem to suppose.

The composer of many old airs was some wandering bard who thrummed a primitive accompaniment according to the varied dictates of his momentary mood. Then, later on, some other minstrel will have acquired the air and set his own improvised arpeggios to it, and so forth, until, after some centuries, a Haydn or Beethoven, not satisfied with those that have been written (for by that time probably many versions had been written, or rather printed), supplies his own setting, with all the mannerisms of his time and the inventiveness of his own Muse. Beethoven and Haydn, in fact, were guilty of an anachronism just as much as we of a later generation are, only their anachronism is hidden by the dust of years, and ours is not: that is the only difference. The truth is, that this idea of anachronism as an argument against

showing forth old melodies in new lights holds but very little water. Just as a Shakespeare play would be greatly marred by performing it in the exact manner it was performed in Shakespeare's day, so would many old melodies be utterly spoilt for our modern ears if we reproduced them in all their primitive thinness. And if those admirers of Mr Granville Barker's recent production of *Twelfth Night* are tempted to advance him as an argument against this, let them reflect that Mr Barker's primitiveness only hinted at the true Shakespearean primitiveness; he did not take young boys to play his female rôles, and so forth, but only gave his audience as strong a flavour of the primitive as they could digest, and no stronger. The same thing applies when Europeans write "Chinese" music; we write music which *sounds* Chinese, but which is no more Chinese in reality than we ourselves are. If it were, it would probably be unbearable.

The point to be emphasised is that music has undergone such great changes of late years that many of us are again compelled to disagree with Keats, and urge that "a thing of beauty" is not always a joy for ever. The five-finger-exercise species of accompaniments which delighted our forefathers can only strike us moderns as deplorable defilements of many a pleasing melody placed over them. Nor does it much

improve matters whether the composer of the melody was the composer of the accompaniment as well, instead of some arranger. One might, without being in the least far-fetched, liken a melody—provided, of course, it be a good one—to a beautiful girl, and the accompaniment to her dress; for however beautiful her face might be, if we saw her walking across Piccadilly Circus in a crinoline and elastic-side boots at the present day, our only reflection could be: "What a pity a beautiful creature makes herself look such a hideous guy!"—that is, if the reflection were not entirely ousted by a stronger one, as to whether she were sane. Nevertheless, in spite of what I have just written, there is a lot of truth in the first line of *Endymion*, but the argument arises when we debate as to what is the thing of beauty. Undoubtedly, to many things there is an essential and a non-essential side. In the case in point the essential side is the melody—or it were better, perhaps, to say, *was* the melody, since it is very doubtful whether in modern music melody plays the essential part any longer. But if melody was the essential side of old songs, whereas its framework, the accompaniment, has become worm-eaten and rotted, then it behoves us moderns to provide a new frame which shall show forth all the beauties so greatly marred by an unsuitable environment. The position is very similar to

that of ancient literature, for nobody objects to the respelling and modernisation of very old poets like Chaucer. They recognise that the essential part is the poetic contents, the meaning and the rhythm, and that the excessive antiquity of language only acts as a barrier to the pleasurable understanding of the inherent poetic spirit. Again, a similar thing may be found in the rendering of poetry from one language to another. It is only a true poet in soul that can make a really great translation, for translation is not a matter of hack work, but of true inspiration. The translator's business is to create a new poem which shall show forth the beauties of the original to the best advantage. This is obvious; but what is more interesting is that, however good the translation of a Classic may be, there are always new translations appearing from time to time. One cannot say that Pope's translation of the *Iliad* is bad, but that it is not particularly suited to our times. So it is with music. One cannot say that Beethoven's accompaniments to old songs are bad, but one is compelled to say that many of them are not suited to our times, nevertheless: but even if they are, there is no reason why there should not be other settings as well. Just as there are several ways of translating a poem, and all can conceivably be good and beautiful, so there can be an almost endless variety of setting an air, each one showing forth a new

beauty in that original melody; for at the risk of repetition I would point out that we are living in a musical age when harmony and polyphony play such an important part that, however beautiful a melody may be in itself (and some people even doubt whether a melody *can* be beautiful in itself), yet if these two factors, or one of them, be lacking, all is lacking. The highly-evolved human mind is not happy unless it has sufficient to occupy its attention. There is nothing more obvious than this; for even in a game, what efficient chess-player takes delight in playing with a beginner? If the mind has not sufficient to do, it wanders away to other things, and mostly into the deserts of boredom. I heard of an extremely musical layman, yet layman withal, who, on hearing some old folk-songs, remarked: "How beautiful these would be if only modern harmonies were set to them!"—a remark which showed me that, at any rate, there were some people who felt the inherent need of what we have been writing about.

And now, in conclusion, I am compelled to admit, however anarchical I shall be considered, that I do not deem it to be a piece of sacrilege to "tamper" with old masterpieces, if one honestly sees the possibility of improving them. How many a genius has been hampered by his time and the inadequateness of its musical apparatus! Is it such a matter of horrifying surprise that Gustav Mahler altered certain

orchestrational passages of Beethoven, when we consider that the trumpet and horns of his day were so limited? Surely it is the business of gratitude towards those old Masters or ancient minstrels to bring forward their creations and present them to the light of day in a manner which shall, at any rate, attempt to make them once more beloved, instead of hidden away or regarded as mere historical objects of mild interest. Indeed, the efficient utilisation of a good theme is creative of a double pleasure to those who are sufficiently tolerant to suppress their prejudices. The popularity of the theme helps to arrest the ear, and the harmonisation or polyphonic treatment either brings out hidden beauties or adds greatly to those already there; and I would point out that those who censure us for putting the spirit of our own age and our own Muse into these old things ought in all logic to censure Tschaikowsky and other great names as well—for the Russian master was very fond of introducing old Russian tunes to his own treatment and modern harmonisation; and if his harmonies do not sound to the present critics as obtrusive as ours do, I am tempted to hint that a little of the mellowing dust of time already has fallen—though, as all dust, silently—upon them, and they have come to that stage of their evolution when they no longer shock the many, but delight them instead.

.

CHAPTER X

CRITICISM AND THE CRITICAL FACULTY

IT is a sad thing that certain customs which have no real justification for their existence should ever come into being, and not only that, but should thrive for numbers of years without the larger public ever realising their absurdity, still less make any attempt to get rid of them. Yet this is just what has happened in connection with the institution known as "musical criticism," which, owing to the nature of things, is in a position to abuse its privileges far more readily than does criticism attached towards any other art. Indeed, out of a perfectly justifiable and, in many respects, dignified thing, a custom has resulted which has entirely lost sight of the impulse which gave it birth, namely, an exploration of a work of art in order to lay bare its inner meaning—and, instead of adhering to that noble office, criticism has degenerated into a mere exhibition of "hole-picking," to use an expressive piece of slang, or at best a mere matter of ordinary newspaper reporting, and nothing more.

Now it is always deplorable when a thing of

beauty and nobility becomes so vulgarised as to degenerate into a thing of ugliness, but it is still more deplorable when human beings gain a livelihood by it in its degenerated form: for, in that we are heralding a new and purer age in the world's history, it is folly to blind ourselves to the many "abuses" of the present one, since what we cannot *see*, we cannot hope to cure; and thus in pointing out the errors of the now existent system, I do so with this latter hope in view, and with no other motive.

To begin with, I may show the attitude of composers in general towards journalistic criticism as a whole, by citing the remark of one particular musician, who said: "I shall only begin to regard the English nation as a musical one when it makes war against barrel-organs and *newspaper critics*." ¹ Since, without wishing to be unduly severe, I am constrained to say that a livelihood which is gained by causing other people annoyance, or doing them positive harm even, can hardly be described as a very elevating one; and yet newspaper criticism not only achieves these two things, but misleads the public as well. The fact is, that a certain type of mind is so apt to regard a thing as true whenever it can read it in print, that even the opinions of an ignoramus become of some weight when exhibited in a newspaper. Indeed, this credulity

¹ See Appendix II.

is so marked on the part of the public at large, that they throw all reason overboard and reject the unprinted opinions of great minds, allowing themselves, on the other hand, to be swayed by the *printed* opinions of men about whom they know nothing.

I may mention in this connection an incident which occurred some years ago when the celebrated conductor, Hans Richter, performed for the first time a new work by a British composer; for, as goes without saying, Richter performed this work because he considered it of merit, and I may even add he considered it of *great* merit; nevertheless, the morning after the performance one of the newspapers, at least, printed a slashing article, saying the composition was "not worthy of the concert promoters, the conductor, or the audience." Nor was the writer of this article even a musically educated man, apart from the significant fact that he had never *written* a bar of music, being entirely incapable of so doing. But the point of the incident manifested itself in a remark of a member of the audience who happened at the time to be receiving tuition from a now well-known singer: "I enjoyed that new work enormously," he said, "and thought it extremely clever, but, of course, I altered my opinion when I read this morning's paper." Strange though it may seem, his

teacher, a musician of great culture, had much difficulty in persuading him to re-alter his opinion, even when he pointed out that Richter's view of the matter, considering his great fame and forty years' musical experience, was of more weight than that of a man who might write newspaper articles but never music itself. Yet such is the power of print, and such is the tendency to be glamourised by it.

It is obvious, then, that true criticism as an art is not one of mere "hole-picking," but a matter of inspiration, inclination and exploration; exploration into a work, not so much to lay bare its blemishes, but to discover the point of view of its creator and thereby help others to perceive its beauties and to comprehend them. That being so, it is as unfitting to ask any man to write a so-called criticism every day or, for that matter, several a day, as to ask a composer to write a song every day, or a poet to create a poem. What is more, the man who agrees to this proposal, knowing it to be impossible of adequate fulfilment; knowing that he will mislead the public; that he will often condemn that which he cannot understand, and so on, is entering into a profession which, on the face of it, is hardly an honest one.

Yet the profession itself and its inauguration by newspaper proprietors is, in one sense, more to blame than the critics who enter it. Although

we as composers regard it as a mere absurdity, not to say farce, yet our reasons for so doing may not be known to the public at large, and the truth of the case is that everyday criticism—so to express myself—infers the strange coincidence that a man who cannot do a thing himself knows vastly more about it than the man who *can*; or, to put it otherwise; in order to be able correctly to judge a thing, one must have no prejudices whatever—not even the prejudices which arise from capability. In fact, to be entirely unprejudiced one must, above all else, not know *how* to do a thing, for this absence of knowledge would appear to be the secret of true criticism. It is true that some critics are themselves unsuccessful composers—though these are rare instances—but this fact, far from making them reliable, is apt to have the contrary effect. The whole matter as it stands at the present day, therefore, is utterly without logic; and, apart from the fact that a man, who knowingly enters a somewhat dishonest profession, cannot possess the most altruistic standard of morality, one is more apt to sympathise with his blunders as the result of his difficult vocation, rather than condemn him. Even if he be a man of some culture, the circumstances under which he works are almost bound to frustrate any valuable achievements; for, not only is he expected to listen to music until its very sound has become abhorrent to him, but he

is also expected to judge of what he hears without adequate time to reflect, or a propitious rehearing of the work to reconsider his decision.

We must, however, admit that certain composers overlook the fact that the vocation itself is at fault, and thus they sweep all critics aside with the convenient but intolerant word "fools," entirely forgetting that nearly every man must perforce be guilty of foolishness regarding difficult matters if he be permitted no leisure to weigh the pros and cons of his subject. But this attitude of intolerance is based on a misconception, and the more philosophical composer adopts an attitude rather of pleasure than contempt when his works are condemned, because he realises there is a certain grave disappointment in being immediately understood; in knowing that a work of art, which has taken him months of thoughtful labour to accomplish, should be comprehended in a few moments by a man who is probably incapable of writing a note of music himself. As the writer of a book of aphorisms, entitled *The Real Tolerance*,¹ compressed into one sentence: "Unfortunate is the creator who is immediately understood, for to be thus understood often means not to be worth understanding." Again, a later aphorism from the same book sums up what is or ought to be the attitude of the more enlightened composer, for it runs, "O you who are a great

¹ A. C. Fifield, publisher.

artist, and have arrived at the noon of your career, when you no longer reap mere slander but also praise, to you I say—if a work of yours receive ten bad criticisms and only three good, then be indeed glad, for it is a sign you are still progressing, but if a work receive ten bad criticisms and ten good, be not so glad, for it is likely to be a sign that you are standing still ; whereas if you receive nothing but good criticisms, then think well upon that work, lest it be wise to destroy it.”

The unfortunate Chattertons of art, then, may be said to be a thing of the past, with few exceptions. Indeed, the young men dying under their burdens of “non-appreciation” belong to a less philosophical age than the present one ; for they were woefully unaware of the philosophy of condemnation, and so the one thing which ought to have elated them merely depressed them instead. That phrase to be found in the Indian Song Celestial “to work thou hast the right, but not to the fruits thereof,” was to them unknown, and likewise the deeper and larger significance of another scriptural maxim — one which the Church has only partially interpreted (as I make bold to say it has done with many such)—I allude to the verse, “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake for so persecuted they the

prophets which were before you." Truly, as long ago as the Prophet of Nazareth, the truth has been known that all greatness must of necessity be at first condemned, and therefore the truly enlightened artist is glad when he is reviled, and a little saddened when *everybody* praises him.

But to return to criticism itself. Schopenhauer, in his essay on the subject (which, by the way, he preludes with the statement that for the most part there is no such thing as the critical faculty), says: "When we speak of *taste* . . . we mean the discovery, or, it may be, only the recognition, of what is right æsthetically, apart from the guidance of any rule; and this, either because no rule has yet been extended to the matter in question, or else because, if existing, it is unknown to the artist, or the critic, as the case may be." To found criticism on rule, then, is to run the great danger of building one's house upon the sands. To found it on rules, furthermore, is to found it on *tradition*, and since the genius oversteps tradition, the critic is confronted with wellnigh insurmountable difficulties all round. The whole thing, in short, becomes a question of his individual taste, and, therefore, the pseudo-criterion for his readers is not what is good, but what he happens to like. "Tell me what newspaper you take, and I'll tell you what composers you admire"—this is the entire affair in one sentence; because the *Echo* says the

exact opposite of what the *Herald* does, and the *Advertiser* again something different, and should by any chance the confirmed and multiform newspaper reader peruse all three of these papers, he is left in a dilemma; his only salvation, in fact, being to read but one paper.

As to what is *taste*, and from whence it comes, this we have already dealt with from one point of view, though a study on the subject might fill volumes, so diverse and multiform its ramifications; but that it must inevitably flavour a man's judgment and more than often entirely distort it, everybody can realise without being told. I once heard of an art-critic whose former avocation had been that of a sea-captain, and if it be true that every thought and characteristic in a man's nature make a convolution in the grey matter of his brain—the seafaring excursions of this man may be reasonably supposed to have made a considerable indenture in his critical faculty. He might, for instance, as a not unlikely corollary, have a special taste for seascapes. But if the critic, instead of these seafaring experiences, has had others of not quite such an irrelevant nature; if he be an ex-parson or schoolmaster, then his uncontrollable desire to preach is bound to force itself into his writings and flavour them with a tinge of “*moralic acid*.” If he be, at the same time, a county councillor, who thinks it his duty to befather the populace, he may condemn all

nudity and prefer his own judgment on the human frame to that of the Deity. To get rid of personality, then, in connection with criticism—or anything, for that matter—is an affair of paramount difficulty; and yet for a judgment to be absolutely sound, this is essential. The man who can shake off his own sheaths (so to speak) and stand outside himself, is the only man capable of expounding true criticism. People with sluggish livers or bilious temperaments ought to be tabooed as critics; and just as a medical examination is an essential prerequisite to reception into the army or navy, so ought it to be with the vocation of critic; and added thereto ought to be a moral examination calculated to discover how much *tolerance* exists in the mind of the aspiring candidate. By this method a little justice might be ensured; and the critics might cease to be a laughing-stock to all enlightened artists.

It is very dangerous for a certain type of person to have power, for his vanity prompts him to make display of it on almost every occasion, and if added unto that power is a species of revenge—revenge for having spent an evening of boredom, well, the matter becomes more than dangerous; it becomes musically murderous. The temptation to show superiority (however false), especially when combined with the power to show it (the power being print), is

very strong with that certain type; and the way to manifest superiority, so he thinks, is to *condemn*. All the same, it is a noteworthy fact that the great spiritual Geniuses and Adepts of the world have never condemned and denounced their fellow-creatures or the works of their fellow-creatures: and to take one sublime instance—Jesus of Nazareth—He alone condemned the condemners; for all others, however low in the social scale or apparently in the moral scale, He had only words of sympathy and understanding. Far from manifesting superiority, the exercise of condemnation only manifests inferiority, since the *raison d'être* of all criticism is to disclose the beauties of a work of art, and if there be not beauties, no noble man will waste his time in saying so at great and useless length. The prerequisite, in truth, for all profound criticism, is sympathy, and such masterpieces as Chesterton's Book on Dickens, John Sampson's Book on Blake, Dowden's Work on Shakespeare, leave us with a greater love for these authors criticised, and a deeper insight into their mind and art. Should a critic attempt to filch away our "loves" by pseudo-sapient negation, not only would he be unlikely to succeed, but we should not thank him if he did. Iconoclasm may be essential at times when superstition reigns supreme, but in the world of art, superstition plays a very small *rôle*—except that it some-

times causes the public to admire very bad composers.

Now, if sympathy is essential to really meritorious criticism, kinship is essential to the acquisition of sympathy, and to quote Schopenhauer's essay again :—"The source of all pleasure and delight is the feeling of kinship . . . in intercourse with others, every man shows a decided preference for those who resemble him; and a blockhead will find the society of another blockhead incomparably more pleasant than that of any number of great minds put together." If this be so, not only will the blockhead be unable to appreciate the ordinary fairly well-educated man, but the latter will be wellnigh as incapable of appreciating the genius. Nay, I go so far as to say that the genius does not always understand himself—a statement which Mr Bernard Shaw made in his book on Ibsen, repeated again in his book on Wagner; though long before Shaw we have the much-ridiculed instance of Browning, who admitted having forgotten the meaning of a certain passage of his—perhaps he *never* knew what it meant. Nevertheless, that ridicule was entirely uncalled for, since it undoubtedly presumed that there existed no meaning at all in the phrase, or if there did, it was merely a matter of chance, and the artist in reality was simply gulling the public. Ordinary people, in fact, find ordinary explanations, and ones which are as

false as they are ordinary; for a true artist never gulls the public—he is neither a buffoon nor a player of games. The vital energy expended on the creation of works of art is too precious to be spent in such a useless manner. If the genius does not always understand certain of his momentary inspirations, it is because he has felt them intuitively and not objectively; he feels, as Wagner said, that he is confronted by a riddle, about which he, too, might have illusions, just as another might.

All the same, a genius, as a rule, understands his own work better than anybody else does; though he may *like* certain other people's work better, because he knows his own productions too well for there to be any actual novelty in them, as far as he is concerned, while it is his unfamiliarity with the creations of other great men that attracts him. But understanding and liking are not always inseparable: there are some things one understands so well that one does not like them; they are too obvious, and hence lack all mysteriousness. That every man must necessarily take his chief pleasure in his own work, because it is the mirror of his own mind, the echo of his own thought, is a statement in which one is tempted not wholly to agree with Schopenhauer; it is very often true, but by no means always so. "Familiarity breeds contempt" not only in family life but, to a certain extent,

even in this connection. It is, in fact, one of the saddest things in the constitution of a genius, that his own productions can never sound as seductive to him as to the initiated outsider, for the very reason that he is too conscious of the making; that they are too familiar to him; that on the whole he understands them too well. If Bernard Shaw lays claim to having been more definitely conscious of Ibsen's thesis than Ibsen himself, it is no disproof of my statement, since one must not forget that all art is capable of almost infinite interpretations; just as the Deity may be worshipped through the medium of Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and many other *isms*, and yet always remain the same Deity, so a thing of beauty may have manifold interpretations and be seen through many different-coloured spectacles and diverse personalities. It is true that Ibsen, being of a more philosophical tendency, is not so manifold in his possibilities as pure poetry, but even the most philosophical art is many-sided in the truths it contains. Is it not a problem whether Omar Khayyam was an absolute materialist or completely the reverse? Indeed, I should say, to the materialist he is a materialist, to the spiritualist he is a spiritualist, to the Sufi, a Sufi, and so forth. I would even go so far as to advance the daring theory that a thing of beauty contains elements suitable for each age; and by that I

do not mean that certain great statements are true for all Time, in the sense that two and two make four, and always have done and always will do without the slightest deviation ; but that a thing which is true for one age may be true for another in an entirely different way—though the being who first gave utterance to that truth may only have been objectively conscious of one interpretation. The remark so often heard, and used in a condemnatory way, that critics have put more into Shakespeare than he himself meant, is one which shows the absence of recognition of this fact. The good or evil of “thinking things into” works of art is dependent on whether the critic thinks bad, stupid, or irrelevant ones ; not on how much the artist *knew* that he meant himself. For let it be noted, that all one can think with justification into a thing must be potentially there, however latently so. Is not the saying, “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear,” equivalent to saying, “He that hath thoughts to think, let him think”? Let us be glad for his thinking thereof.

Thus, in conclusion, we may state, then, that the true artist expects to find interpretations of his work which may have entirely escaped his own notice, and the greater the artist the more indulgence and sympathy he possesses towards those who either (in his opinion) misinterpret him or condemn him. That Wagner should

have written to his friend, Roeckel, "How can an artist expect that what he has felt intuitively should be perfectly realised by others," only shows that he, too, furnishes us with a noble example of this fact. To turn the other cheek means more than to show a sublime self-mastery; it means also the realisation of the fact that one is possessed of infinitely more than the being who smites. If kings and millionaires are smitten, nay murdered, nobody is surprised, but one must also not be surprised if philosophers are murdered too—whether physically or morally; for there may be more than at first meets the eye in that remark of De Quincey—namely, that "If a man calls himself a philosopher and never had his life attempted, rest assured there is nothing in him." The fact that a man is damned with faint praise has become a truism, hardly worthy to be stated, but the logical extension of the fact that one is hence wellnigh annihilated by *great* praise, this seems to be far removed from such, because it entirely depends on *when* one is greatly praised. It is easy to extol a man's work when Time is supposed to have shown it worthy of extollation—but that is an entirely different matter; the praise which comes after the condemnation is, in most cases, a true one, because it is the result of authority combined with self-hypnotization, not the result of easy comprehension; and

when I use the word "true," I mean it is probably true as *fact*, however insincere or sincere on the part of the extollers.

But I would now close in on my point. I would contend that stupidity on the part of the critics is not the reason, or at any rate the chief reason, why all geniuses have been condemned; the whole matter lies far deeper—and it lies in the fact that there is only one person who understands a genius, and that person is the genius himself. As I have already stated, he may not understand *all* that is within him, but be that as it may, he understands his goal; he alone can realise what he desires to achieve. However intelligent, however perspicacious his critics may be, they are all groping in the dark, because they can only perceive a part of his personality. To them each factor stands alone, because they are ignorant of the great unity into which each resolves itself, and hence its "aloneness" makes it seem illogical and incomprehensible. If the epithet "stupid" can apply to critics—and I daresay it can, since there are some blockheads in every calling—that stupidity does not lie in their incapacity to understand, but in their capacity to understand that they *do not* understand—as already pointed out. Nor is the advisability of rendering "first aid to critics" by divulging to them that hidden goal, that *raison d'être* for all these factors, one

which is not open to doubt. A theory is often absurd unless we see a concrete example of it, and the possibilities of traversing the ocean by steam were held up to ridicule and pronounced by some as absurd as attempting to fly to the moon, until they could actually see afterwards with their physical eyes how it was done. There is, in fact, such a host of *known* laws brought to bear against a new theory, that the possibility of there being any as yet *unknown* ones to justify it, never enters mortal mind: for intellectual vanity is one of the deepest pitfalls in human nature, and the existence of myriads of unconscious "Mr Podsnaps" who sweep scores of not immediately comprehensible things out of the universe, would be a matter for wonderment if these gentlemen did not fill every nook and cranny of all vocations in life. Real intellectual courage lies in the admittance of ignorance; to know that we don't know is the height of wisdom and mental far-sightedness. And is it not Ruskin who proclaims: "Very ready we are to say of a book, 'How good this is—that's exactly what I think!' But the right feeling is, 'How strange that is! I never thought of that before, and yet I see it is true; or if I do not now, I hope I shall some day.'"

CHAPTER XI

THE HIDDEN ASPECTS OF MUSIC

IN writing a book on Modernism and its Philosophy, it would certainly constitute an error against completeness to omit certain ideas and ideals which recent thought has brought to bear upon art, musical and otherwise. These may be ideals which a large number of people fundamentally disagree with, but which, nevertheless, cannot with justification be omitted, any more than science can omit certain factors in one or other of its branches merely because narrow religious sectarians pronounce them to be contrary to Biblical teaching.

To begin with, I must remind my readers that a man may possess the highest talents for artistic creativeness and be quite ignorant, or at any rate extremely unclear, as to the real function of art itself: and this may not seem so strange if we also reflect that a healthy being may possess a perfectly sound liver—to use a very homely analogy—and yet be entirely ignorant as to any of the functions of that necessary organ. We

have, in fact, to turn to doctors and physiological scientists in order to discover these, and, similarly, we needs must turn to philosophers, psychologists and occultists to discover the functions and *raison d'être* of art.

Now, at one time, there was a great deal of affirming that art existed for its own sake only, and the catch-phrase attached to this affirmation was *l'art pour l'art*—an ambiguous one, which might mean a good deal or very little. What it was supposed to mean, however, was that art should have no moral aim; indeed, as Nietzsche puts it, when refuting the fact, "No end at all, rather than a moral end." Yet he goes on to ask: "What does all art do? Does it not praise, does it not glorify, does it not select, does it not bring into prominence? . . . Does it not tend towards a *desirableness of life*, for art is the great stimulus to life"; therefore, how could art be understood as purposeless, as aimless, as *l'art pour l'art*? The statement, then, if we look at facts, does not hold good and, as a matter of truth, it only came into being through an undue emphasis of one particular phase of morality on the part of a certain school, the adherents of which proclaimed: "I write a play, a novel, a poem, or what-not, in order to imbue the public with a particular moral idea—in a word, to *improve* them—and unless I do this, my art is aimless." Thus the contention, instead of

remaining connected with the motive in the artist's mind, became connected with art itself—for the opponents of this school were doing exactly the same thing (allowing a wider meaning for the word "morality"), the only difference being they were unconscious of the motive. Certainly their attitude was a far more fertile one, since experience has taught us that books written solely for a moral purpose are nearly always productive of inferior art; nevertheless, motives do not alter facts, and to reduce the matter to its simplest form, the painter who teaches us to perceive a hitherto unperceived beauty is enriching our moral nature—and still more so, when he teaches us to see beauty in what we heretofore regarded as mere ugliness. There is also another point to be remembered, namely, that just as faith, patriotism, or romantic love may act as an inspiration to the artist, a moral idea may equally do so—and has done so, over and over again, to the very greatest artists: for, as Herbert Spencer maintains, moral beauty represents something far superior to intellectual beauty, just as the latter represents something superior to the purely physical; this being so, there seems no alternative but to state boldly—in spite of the outcry to be expected from the adherents of the "art-for-art's-sake" school—that if moral (meaning, at the same time, spiritual) beauty be the highest form of beauty, then that

which expresses it must be the highest form of art.

Yet all this being so, how can it apply to music, especially when taking into account that we have raised the question as to whether music expresses anything but *itself*. It is here we must review certain occult doctrines, engendered from experience (for doctrines which are not founded on *somebody's* experience may be regarded as practically valueless), and we must review them as the only means of helping us out of our difficulty—the difficulty of showing that music is not *fundamentally* different from the other arts, as far as its function is concerned. In other words, and to put it quite simply, Can music also have a moral effect, can it inspire moral feelings without actually expressing them? The answer is most assuredly *yes*. Let any reflecting person remember the effect of martial music upon soldiers, and he will be convinced, at any rate as to the partial truth of our assertion. But the question arises, How is this moral effect engendered when there are no suggestionistic words to call it into being? To answer this, we must resort to those occult doctrines just referred to.

Now, occult lore holds that man is not merely his physical body, but that interpenetrating that body are other subtler bodies, notably sensation-body, emotion-body, mental-body, intuition-body,

and even yet others, which, however, we may ignore for our present purposes; and it is essential to add that these bodies are perceptible to the trained psychic, though imperceptible to the ordinary man, the reason being that only the psychic has awakened the latent faculties of two glands in the brain, known as the pineal gland and the pituitary body; the two physical organs of psychic perception. Although the first-mentioned sensation-body has little to do with the point in question, I may state in passing that when chloroform or gas is administered, it is this body which is forced out of the physical one by the action of the drug, though doctors are unaware of the fact. What, however, we have especially to deal with, is the emotion-body, or astral vehicle so-called, for on this one, music has a very marked effect—or, to express it more scientifically, the *vibrations* of music have a very marked effect—for this body is composed of a very rare form of matter, and is susceptible in the highest degree to vibratory influence, just as it is susceptible to alcohol, opium, hashish, and other pernicious poisons.

It is further necessary to state that this emotion-body is dense or otherwise (comparatively speaking, of course), according to the character and quality of emotions to be found in the man himself—as also its vibratory rate

is conditioned in like manner. What music does, then, is to modify the emotion-body, accelerating its rate of vibration and readjusting its particles, altering even its pattern and colours, as the violin-bow drawn over the edge of a sound plate sprinkled with sand, alters the patterns formed by that process according to the manner in which the bow is drawn. I am fully aware, however, that after this statement the materialist will ask why these subtle bodies are necessary to the argument when the musical vibrations might, with seemingly equal justification, be said to influence the physical brain direct? The only answer I can give in reply is to state: I am not writing this book in order to uphold this or that conception of the universe, but to maintain that which I know to be true, irrespective of whether it coincides with materialism or any other standpoint. Indeed, inductive reasoning can contrive to arrive at almost any conclusion if it will only leave a sufficient number (or, perhaps, even merely one) of the facts out of the case; but for this reason, inductive logic is ever unreliable when the truth, and solely the truth, is its object. Thus I alluded to the emotion-body and others as existent *facts*, and not as mere spokes in the wheel of an argument; and not only are they facts, but in conjunction with them are certain planes of consciousness. That is to say, each

body functions within the limits of its corresponding plane or gamut of vibrations. In a word, as there exists a physical plane as an objective fact, there exists an emotional plane, mental plane, and intuitional plane as well. Indeed, a very significant point may be mentioned in connection with this, and I refer to tendencies which a large section of artistic activity manifested prior to, and during the War. If we remember the extreme viciousness which the pictorial art manifested, and combine the statements of psychics that the emotional or astral plane showed disturbances of an unprecedented nature, what conclusions can we not draw? Even leaving occultism for the moment aside, art and emotion must always be associated, and if the emotional world be torn by emotions of terrible discord and horrible conflict, art itself will be bound to manifest, at least, something of that conflict and its attendant evils. Says occult experience: "Hardly ever in the history of the planet has the astral plane been in the state it now is"; and, looking back at the history of art, can we say, to our knowledge, that it has ever shown such tendencies as it does in the present day? Painting seems to be no longer a medium for self-expression and beauty-expression, but simply for the expression of some theory—each theory possessing a name to distinguish it from its

contemporaries and predecessors. Nor is literature left out of the running: and a manifestation of all that was extraordinarily childish (to use no harsher expression) appeared in the shape of a journal called *Blast*, a crowning expression for the craving for novelty, to be plunged into oblivion by a blast of a different order—the trumpet-call to war. And music: does not any composition of Leo Ornstein, whatever he may elect to call it, seem pregnant with the cries of conflict and nothing but conflict? Melody has been banished, polyphony has been banished, only discord remains; for, occultly speaking, such music is the outcome of association with the lower levels of the astral plane, the slums, as it were, of that region, transplanted through the medium of sound on to the planes of earth.

What can we glean from all this? Why, that the higher the plane to which music corresponds, the more elevating will be its effect on the listeners—the more potent, as it were, will be its mental or spiritual efficacy; for at the beginning of this twentieth century we, in spite of all our vaunted enlightenment and progress in scientific knowledge, are coming perilously near the conclusion that music is not only an art, but also a form of magic—as the ancients, including Shakespeare, maintained. Indeed, an interesting article recently appeared, written by Percy Scholes, in which he stated that whenever

music was introduced into any Shakespearean play, it was frequently, if not invariably, associated with magic or sorcery. Even the well-known quotation, "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast" is, I make bold to say, intended to be taken literally, the word "charm" meaning magic, pure and simple. Nor is this all. Since doctors are now recognising the efficacy of music as a healing agency, notably in connection with nervous and mental diseases—and, moreover, in the face of so many experiments and researches conducted by such scientists as Richet, Charcot, Sir William Crookes, and other eminent men—why should we despise the word "magic," because it was at one time merely used as a convenient generalisation for a certain class of phenomena? If the poet chooses to employ simple words, such as witchcraft, obsession, ecstasy, sorcery, and magic, while the scientist prefers such erudite appellations as telekinesis, telasthesia, springomyelitis, etc., to enlarge his already overburdened vocabulary, does it imply that one is any nearer to truth than the other? In fact, without extravagance, we might aptly say that the only difference between the truth of the artist and the truth of the scientist is one of words: conceding at the same time, however, that the artist is the first to win the race of Truth itself.

But to return to the particular magic of music and its rationale. As already hinted in connection

with our statements regarding man's subtler interpenetrating bodies, there exist other planes of consciousness beside the physical on which each of those bodies function. Hitherto we have only referred to the astral plane, but it now becomes essential to mention the two others, namely, the mental and intuitional: for each of these planes possess their own distinctive species of music. Now it stands to reason that the creative artist who can attune his mind to the highest of these planes (high in the sense of rapidity of vibration, and not in the sense of spacial altitude), will succeed in producing the most elevated music, and hence the swifter the vibratory rate inherent in such music, the more potent the effect (as previously stated) on the receptive emotion-bodies of its listeners. I say *receptive*, because there are those whose emotion-bodies are so comparatively dense, that they are incapable of responding in any perceptible way, being lamentably insensible to all forms of spirituality. But it may be asked, apart from ordinary critical methods employed in artistic valuation, what is the criterion of lofty music, and how may it become perceptible? Here again we are compelled to bring the psychic to our assistance for, it must be noted, that every musical composition produces a thought-and-colour-form¹ in the astral space, and, according

¹ See Appendix III.

to that form and colour is to be gauged the spiritual value of the composition under review. If the preponderating colours be lilac, violet, blue, pink, yellow, and apple-green, combined with a form of lofty structure and vastness, then the work is one of intrinsic spiritual value; if, however, the preponderating colours be muddy browns, greys, cloudy reds, etc., then the work may be recognised at once to be one of a lower order. This method of gauging the spiritual value of art, however, is only possible to him who has awakened the latent faculties of the pineal gland and pituitary body.

Now in conclusion—for the hidden side of music is a subject too vast to treat of extensively in a book of this nature—we are in a better position to recognise why an art which *expresses* nothing material, nothing moral (at least as far as words or pictorial imagery are concerned), can yet have a moral and spiritual effect on its listeners. Indeed, who amongst us, on coming away from the hearing of some great masterpiece, has not been moved to greater aspirations; to the desire of acquiring a greater sense of Love, of spiritual strength, and other moral qualities of the soul? Yet, on the other hand, who has halted to inquire why this should be so, and what magic is inherent in that masterpiece to attain such mighty results? That question is left for the philosopher and occultist

to answer ; though every one of us is confronted each day by the fact that the most powerful agencies in Nature work invisibly : only the conducting rail, but not the electricity, is visible to the eye, as also is only the barometer, but not the atmospheric pressure, which moves the indicator. So with music, the sound is perceptible to the ear, but the potent vibrations which play upon our emotional bodies are invisible ; nay, occultly speaking, the nobler the music, the greater is their invisibility, and, at the same time, the greater their potency and power to elevate the human soul. As Lafcadio Hearn said, when lecturing to his Japanese students : " Does art make you feel generous, make you willing to sacrifice yourself, make you eager to attempt some noble undertaking ? If it does, then it belongs to the higher class of art ; but, on the other hand, if it does not make you feel kindly, more generous, morally better than you were before, then I should say, whether it be music, painting, sculpture, or poetry, no matter how clever, it does not belong to the highest form of art." And truly the highest form, as we all know, is alone the form which attains to a degree of permanency, and does not fade away into oblivion with the advent of every new fashion : for only that which belongs to the spiritual plane can endure ; only those beauties which are culled from the plane of

eternal beauty can withstand the corruption of time; and as the spirit plane is the plane of selflessness as well as durability, of pure love and ecstasy, by reason of this it is that true art inspires to greater nobility of soul and greater desirableness for the highest expression of LIFE.

APPENDIX I

THE OCCULT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOUND AND COLOUR

My article entitled "Some Occult Aspects of Music," which appeared recently in the *Monthly Musical Record*, evoked a certain number of questions, especially in America, and also one or two requests that I should enlarge upon the subject, giving the exact colour which corresponded to each note of the scale. I therefore wrote to the Editor of *Musical America* a short letter, setting forth what was requested of me, he on his part printing it and receiving as the result one or two letters disagreeing with the table of colours I had set forth. This struck me as especially interesting, in view of what Francis Galton writes in his celebrated *Inquiries into Human Faculty*, where he remarks: "Persons who have colour associations are unsparingly critical. To ordinary individuals one of these accounts seems just as wild and lunatic as another, but when the account of one seer is submitted to another seer, who is sure to see the colours in a different way, the latter is scandalised and almost angry at the heresy of the other." And yet if it be a fact that each note of music does actually produce a colour in what occultists sometimes call the mental space, how is it that accounts differ at all? and does the fact of their differing explode the theory (?) of music and colour possessing really any association, or merely mean that clairvoyance is as liable to fall into error as any other faculty of the human make-up? For my own part, although I hold

the latter view, I must point out that a great many people who associate colours either with letters of the alphabet or tones of music can hardly be termed clairvoyants at all—at any rate if their psychic faculties do not extend any further than this ; and therefore we must only expect anything like accuracy from persons who have gone through the necessary occult training, and not from people whose imaginations are far more active than their pineal glands.

To begin with, what, after all, is clairvoyance, and how is it developed? for it is essential to be clear on this point if we wish to arrive anywhere near the truth. I have just referred to the pineal gland, which is a gland situated in the brain and around which there is a good deal of controversy on the part of doctors ; for they have failed to see the rationality of its existence—since it does not appear to function with most people. Some doctors, however, think to discover its *raison d'être* by injecting it into people, after which certain results accrue, whereupon, by a process of logic alone known to doctors, a certain connection is established between those results and the why and wherefore of the organ itself. Such a procedure, in fact, suggests the analogy that by eating liver for breakfast, or by having a solution of liver injected into the blood, one could, by the results that accrued, be able to discover (if one did not already know it), what part the liver played in the functions of the human body. Whether *any* of the functions of the pineal gland may be discovered by this method I am not prepared to say, but I do say that, so far, *all* of its functions have not been laid down by doctors working on these lines, for they have not hit upon the fact known to occultists (who have other scientific modes of discovering things) for centuries, viz., that the pineal gland is the organ of psychic perception, though, in case the knowledge should be abused, they have kept the secret guarded from all those who have not shown themselves first worthy to possess it. And what actually happens when trained clairvoyants use their psychic sight? Why, they are conscious of a certain activity

which appears to come from between the eyes just above the bridge of the nose ; and it is in this way that not only are the colours of sound sensed, but also the human aura and other vibrations far too subtle to be perceived by the ordinary human eye.

And yet the "nature of things" does not leave us by any means entirely dependent on clairvoyance and clairvoyants for the evidence of a connection between sound and colour, for certain remarkable cases of sense abnormality have afforded undeniable corroboration of this connection. I quote a few passages from *The Law of the Rhythmic Breath*, by E. A. Fletcher :¹—

"In Berlin an operation was performed upon a man's brain which required the severing of both the auditory and the visual nerves. When the nerves were reunited they were mismated, the upper portions of the optic nerves being joined to the under sections of the auditory nerves, and *vice versa*. The result of this distressing blunder is that the man *sees* sounds and *hears* colours. Looking at a red object he heard a deep bass tone, and when blue was shown, the *sound* was like the tinkle of electric bells ; but the ringing of an electric call-bell produced the sensation of blue light, and listening to Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony* caused a vision of green meadows and waving corn."

Another strange case is related by Prof. Lombroso, the Italian scientist, concerning a so-called "hysterical" patient who had completely lost her eyesight, but was able to read with the *tip of her ear*. "As a test, the rays of the sun were focused upon her ear through a lens, and they dazzled her as if turned upon normal eyes, causing a sensation of being blinded by unbearable light. Still more puzzling to Prof. Lombroso was the fact that her sense of taste was transferred to her knees, and that of smell to her toes." I will not enter into the question why an occultist who is acquainted with what are called the Tattwas is not surprised at this seemingly

¹ London : W. Rider & Son, Ltd., 8 Paternoster Row. 3s. 6d. net.

grotesque manifestation of peculiar adjustment ; suffice it to say that the knees and the feet are centres of great activity ; the former for the "gustiferous ether," the latter for the "odoriferous ether."

But leaving aside the evidence that may be furnished from diseased and abnormal conditions, we find that science recognises more and more the law of vibration ; and we may talk in one sense of coarse and fine vibrations, the greater the velocity the finer being the vibration, so to speak. Still, "when we speak of coarseness in this connection, and especially in reference to colour, it must be understood in 'a comparative' sense. Thus red vibrations, the largest waves of visible light, are so small that 39,000 of them grouped side by side cover only one inch of space. The agreement of red with the fundamental tone in music was early recognised, each being the coarsest vibration of its kind." It will be seen then, that science has a good deal to say on the matter, both in the past and also in the present, judging from the number of eminent scientists who busy themselves with the problem. Indeed, Miss Beatrice Irwin, in her excellent book entitled *The New Science of Colour*, quotes the names of many doctors, philosophers, professors, etc., who are experimenting in a direction which seems bound to *prove* sooner or later that the statements occultists and clairvoyants have made for centuries are scientifically correct.

All the same, until science and occultism do actually meet on the same ground, it must be noted that I am taking my table of scale-colours from the minds of trained clairvoyants, who are unanimous on the subject, and not from people whose very elementary psychic faculties get involved with their own imaginations and, therefore, distort the results. Furthermore, the table I submit is a matter of occult lore, and to be found in standard works on occultism : therefore I have no hesitation in quoting a passage of Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*, which I find entirely corresponds to my friend Mr Robert King's view of the subject ; Mr King being a psychic of note in

England, and regarded as an authority among occultists. The table then is as follows :—

C—Red :	This note and colour corresponding to					Power.
D—Orange	„	„	„	„	„	Energy.
E—Yellow	„	„	„	„	„	Intellect.
F—Green	„	„	„	„	„	Sympathy.
G—Blue	„	„	„	„	„	Devotion.
A—Indigo	„	„	„	„	„	Selfless Love.
B—Violet	„	„	„	„	„	Psychism.

The semitones, as may readily be imagined, are a midway shade between each of these colours. The explanatory passage from the *Secret Doctrine* runs: “The best psychics . . . can perceive colours produced by the vibrations of musical instruments, every note suggesting a different colour. As a string vibrates and gives forth an audible note, so the nerves of the human body vibrate and think in correspondence with the various emotions under the general impulse of the circulating vitality of Prana (cosmic energy), thus producing undulations in the psychic aura of the person, which results in chromatic effects.” But, to further strengthen my contention and to point out that clairvoyance is connected not only with musical tones and their colours, I would have it noted that the vowels have also their corresponding colours perceptible to the psychic. These are as follows :—

Colours:	violet,	yellow,	indigo,	orange,	red,	blue,	green.
Vowels:	a	e	ee	i	o	u	oo

And yet, here again we find the trained psychic differs from those who associate, by an elementary form of clairvoyance much tainted by imagination, colours and the vowels of the English alphabet. One lady quoted by Galton sees A as pure white, E as red, I as gamboge, O as black, U as purple, and Y as a dingier colour than I; whereas her daughter (this lady writes) sees A as blue, E as white, I as black, O as whitey-brownish and U as opaque brown, but it is self-evident to any occultist that these people do not perceive these colours

with the pineal gland, but merely by a process of imaginative association, as also those who "see" certain colours in connection with the days of the week. I read, for instance, that one woman sees a kind of oval flat wash of yellow emerald-green in connection with Wednesday, and for Tuesday a grey-sky colour, for Thursday a brown-red irregular polygon, and for Friday a dull yellow smudge. All this, although hardly scientific, is at least interesting, in so far as it shows how wary one must be in setting down authorities for our contention, for it may be mentioned that the late composer, M. Scriabine, sets a different table of colour-tones to the one I have quoted, which naturally leads one to inquire, before advancing him as an authority, whether he was a reliable psychic or merely an imaginative artist, a question which I am personally unable to answer.

But now comes another matter connected with the perception of colour-tones; and I refer to the question of key in a musical composition. Presuming a work written in the key of F, yet constantly wandering into other keys, as is the case with most modern compositions, what is perceptible to the clairvoyant? And here a difficulty of description arises, owing to the fact that clairvoyance deals with four-dimensional space, while ordinary parlance can only deal with three. If we place in physical-plane parlance a dark oil-colour over a light one, the latter disappears, in that it is covered up, but this is not the case with astral plane colours, for these colours interpenetrate each other, *i.e.*, one tint does not obliterate the other. Nevertheless, the colour of the particular key will always preponderate over the others, so to speak, and act as a kind of background, with the difference, however, that what is in the foreground never blots out a portion of it, as it does with the physical-plane landscape, but leaves it perceptible all the time. This is the only lame and inadequate attempt at description I can offer, but at any rate it may serve as a hint to those who are interested in the subject. I should add (although somewhat extraneous to the matter in question),

that not only does a musical composition exhibit a kaleidoscope of varying colours, but also a form of varying grandeur according to the loftiness and complexity of its conception. And it must be stated, however shocking this may seem to the worshippers of the old Masters, that modern music of a certain sort manifests far grander and larger colour- and thought-forms than do the earlier composers. The form (which I have seen depicted) produced by a composition of Mendelssohn cannot compare with the monumental grandeur and vastness which emanates from an overture of Richard Wagner, nor is the purity and lovely vividness of the colour-scheme to be compared either—a fact which disposes of the supposition, at least for occultists, that Wagner's music is of a sensual and low-plane nature. And here I may touch on another scrap of occult lore, viz., that all pure and clean colours pertain to the lofty, and all muddy ones pertain to the vicious and sensual: though, it will at once be asked, if each note represents a clear, clean colour, how can an element of muddiness appear in connection with a musical composition? And the question would seem a knotty one, did we not have to take into account the mind and intentions of the composer himself, which again interpenetrates the colour-scheme of his musical creation. It must also be remembered that out of the seven attributes set forth as corresponding to the seven notes of the scale, certain ones are loftier than others—and that a work, for instance, in which indigo (selfless love) preponderates, would be of a higher order than one in which sheer power or intellect is predominant. Also pitch has a good deal to do with the etherealness of the colours; and thus, for example, when violet becomes very pale lilac, a considerable transformation takes place in the spiritual value of the colour—lilac being the hue of the highest spirituality.

In conclusion, it is hardly necessary to point out what an added pleasure the music-lover must derive from this most spiritual of all the arts, if he be at the same time a true

clairvoyant. But if there be any who regret their psychic blindness, occultism avers that in each person clairvoyance is latent, and can be cultivated like many another faculty, while to this it adds the consoling doctrine that psychism is a matter of evolution, and the day will come when psychic sight will be as patent to all beings as physical sight is at the present time.

APPENDIX II

THE MUSICAL CONSTITUTION OF ENGLAND

THE question as to whether the English are a musical nation is one so hackneyed that it arises at almost any tea-party to which some unfortunate musician has been bidden : and, like many questions haphazardly dropped into the stream of everyday conversation, the questioner is curiously hazy as to the meaning of what he asks, and the answerer probably equally hazy as to the meaning of what he replies. Indeed, hardly any one who discusses this matter seems to have a clear conception of what really constitutes the musicality of a nation, and truly the more one thinks about it the less does one feel competent to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. Nor is the object of this article to answer that question in the manner a musician might be supposed to answer it, for I, too, must plead guilty to incompetence, the subject being somewhat outside the faculty of musicianship on the one hand, and there being no criterion on the other, when all has been said. But what I would attempt to do (and in that attempt some light may be thrown on the subject) is to draw attention to the strange musical constitution of England, a constitution which is as perverse as (to my knowledge) it is unique ; and unless, at any rate in certain directions, a change is brought about, the aspirations concerning British music and the part it is to play in England and elsewhere are little likely to be realised.

And, to begin with, I have no hesitation in saying that

England is producing at the present time composers whose works will long outlive the death of their physical bodies ; and I may mention Delius for one (born in Bradford) and Percy Grainger for another, whose value, by the way, I do not estimate from the works he has composed and *published*, but from the works he has composed but *not* published. The public, in fact, only knows of this most British of all composers from what Chesterton would perhaps call his "Tremendous Trifles" ; the larger works being hidden away as being too difficult for performance in this country. Now, most people are aware of the large amount of "talk" concerning British music and the younger generation of composers—and yet the musical constitution of Britain is of such a nature that those very composers are compelled to go abroad for the publication and performance of the particular works which exhibit their true value as serious musicians. In other words, those who have attained to celebrity are celebrated solely for their trifles in this country, while abroad they are celebrated solely for their serious works—and this was brought home very particularly before the War when on my travels in Germany and Austria I endeavoured to gain a performance for one of Grainger's small but, to my mind, exquisite fancies ; for my proposal was rejected with the words, "In this country [Austria] the work would not be regarded as serious." My own case (if I may be pardoned for mentioning it) is also illustrative of this fact, in that my songs are practically unknown abroad, whereas (at any rate *before* our conflict with Germany and Austria) what I regard as my serious works were performed to a very considerable extent. As to Delius, his case is only different in so far that he has composed hardly any "trifles" at all : with the result that he has been compelled to wait until something approaching his fiftieth year before receiving recognition in his own country. Nor must we omit Dr Ethel Smyth, who is in the same situation, and whose operas gained their first hearing in Germany. Thus the unpopular fact forces itself upon us that had it not

been for German musical enterprise our British composers would have found themselves in sad straits; and if we turn to Elgar as practically the only example of an English creator of large dimensional works, whose publishers are British, we cannot overlook the fact that even he was "discovered" by an Austrian—namely, Hans Richter.

It will be seen then (and the irony of the situation will be far from pleasing to our sense of patriotism) that the enemies of England have not only been the first to come forward and help English music to exist as a published fact at all, but they also show a deeper comprehension of it than do the English themselves. And yet to blame British publishers for their lack of enterprise (or patriotism for that matter), is to forget that publishers are not philanthropic concerns; and that the real cause of the trouble lies in the peculiar musical constitution of Great Britain: for if there existed in this country a sufficient demand for the serious works of British composers, then, no doubt, British publishers with no connective branches on the Continent would be ready to publish their works. As it is, the branches of German firms in England come forward¹ and, with the combined markets of England and the Continent open to them, manage either to make the enterprise pay, or hope to do so in the future. Whether such a hope, however, is likely to be realised, if we take the War into consideration, is certainly a matter of doubt; but I may mention the fact that when recently in Switzerland I received a most friendly letter from the head of my German publishers in Mainz, pointing out that, although they had been obliged to lay aside my works for the time being, they fully expected to be able to "resuscitate" them after the War was over.

Now, although the British public undoubtedly want serious British music (otherwise there would be less said about it) yet they do not seem to want the particular kind they have got. If music, in fact, could be seen and not heard, that requisite to the good conduct of children would suit them admirably; for

¹ The War has now put a stop to this.

our concert promoters inform us that it is only necessary to include a serious British work in almost any programme for the financial side of the undertaking to suffer considerably. As to the Festival of British Music, organised by Sir Thomas Beecham (a musical philanthropist quite unique in the history of the world), well, if we are honest, we must admit the fact that it was not a success, nor even approaching to one. Indeed, in the face of these facts the British public can only be said to desire British music in theory, and not in practice, and that desire, such as it is, may be regarded as springing from the attribute of national vanity rather than the search for musical pleasure. England, in short, wants to have its cake, but, regarding it as something nasty, she does not want the trouble of eating it. She wants to possess great composers, but is quite content to listen solely to their "trifles," and in some cases does not even bother to inquire whether aught but these "trifles" exist. Even the imputation of laziness was attached to one composer because (as was supposed) he produced no works of large dimensions: yet, as a matter of fact, he produced many, which were, however, only performed on the Continent, being regarded as too difficult or otherwise unsuitable to be brought forward here.

This brings me to another point: the fact, namely, that orchestral production of anything new in this country is so costly that even when a small section of the public desire novel British works, some musical philanthropist has to come forward and be prepared to lose money, as Sir Thomas Beecham and also Mr Balfour Gardiner have done. Even in the case of new works, not of British penmanship, at one time we were dependent almost entirely on the goodwill of Sir Edgar Speyer (again a German by birth), who came forward and paid for extra rehearsals. And now that Sir Edgar Speyer has left the country, and Mr Balfour Gardiner has given up his own concerts in disgust, were it not for the unparalleled energy and generosity of Sir Joseph¹ and Sir

¹ Since deceased.

Thomas Beecham in conjunction, it seems extremely likely that the whole of British music would come to an end. Even Sir T. Beecham is greatly hampered in his production of the works of native composers by the fact that the bulk of them are not published. Indeed, they are less likely than ever to be published now that the War has resulted in nearly all engravers being interned; for music engraving is wellnigh at a standstill, seeing that, here again, we are dependent on Germans. It is self-evident, then, in the face of the foregoing, that the optimism voicing itself in the sentences "but all will be changed after the War," or "the War will do wonders for British music," is an optimism based entirely on impulsive thinking and not on premeditation. Why should the War alter a trait in the British musical constitution when it can so easily adjust the direction of that trait into another country merely? And I allude to the fact that, having favoured many things German in music hitherto, it is likely now to favour to an undue degree things French, Russian, and Belgian. Nor has it waited until the War to take infinitely more trouble over French music than it has over its own. There were, in fact, one or two works by English composers which had on their first performances absolute and uncontended success; so much so that letters appeared in the papers demanding a second hearing, but without result. The first performance of Debussy's *L'après midi*, on the other hand, was a dead failure, and yet it was performed again and again until it became the popular piece it now is, and deserves to be. In truth, by what sort of perverse logic can one account for the fact that it is only necessary for a British work to reap an undoubted success for it never to be performed again? Let those answer this question who can.

And, finally, we come to an institution, the unmentionable tastelessness of which no country in the world but England would tolerate—namely, the ballad concert, and all it implies; for in this connection the question certainly does arise as to whether the musicality of a nation can be measured by what

it tolerates or by what it condemns. In other words, are the English so musical that they require the almost uninterrupted tinkle of a barrel-organ in their streets while they walk, and the equally uninterrupted strains of very indifferent instrumentalists in their *cafés* while they eat and drink? Or are they so unmusical that they cannot discriminate between music and noise, and therefore the ballads (which, by the way, are not really ballads) they hear first in the ballad concerts, and, later on, on the barrel-organs, seem as worthy to them of serious attention (or more so) than the *Prélude to Tristan* or Beethoven's Ninth Symphony? I will not attempt to answer these questions, but I do urge that ballad concerts and the pecuniary inducement attached to them for singers to prostitute their talents and sing bad songs on the royalty system is one which is hardly a credit to any nation, musical or otherwise. These last-mentioned institutions, in fact, are the worst vices of England's musical activity. Fortunately, however, the artistic vices of a nation, or whether it be musical or unmusical, do not militate against its producing great composers. The Hungarians are certainly regarded as a musical people, but they have not produced one composer of the very first rank; nor have the Italians produced a Beethoven or a Bach. And that being so, even those who are not prepared to regard certain of our existent English talents as great and enduring may be prepared to regard Wagner's presage as likely of fulfilment—namely, that the next great composer would come from England.

APPENDIX III

PERCY GRAINGER : THE MUSIC AND THE MAN

ALTHOUGH Percy Grainger is a pianist of very great powers, it is not with that more ephemeral side of his personality that I intend to deal in this study, but with that part of his creative genius which, I have no hesitation in saying at the outset, will leave an imperishable name in the history of English music. My friendship with Percy Grainger covers a period now verging on twenty years, and thus I have followed his development and watched the growth of his personal and musical soul almost from its commencement, at any rate in this incarnation. Already at the age of thirteen, Grainger was composing works for the pianoforte in a style which distinctly flavoured of Handel, for it is a noteworthy fact that as the human embryo goes through all the stages of pre-human evolution before it becomes Man, so does the creative talent go through the styles of the old Masters before arriving at modernity and its own individuality. There may be exceptions to this in the domains of music and art, but certainly the exceptions are not so many as to nullify the tendency.

Percy Grainger studied at Frankfort-on-the-Main when the Hoch Conservatoire was one of the finest musical educational institutions in Europe. Among its staff were to be found the celebrities of the day—Hugo Heermann, that incomparable violinist, Hugo Becker, the 'cellist of fame, Frau Schroeder-Hanfstaengel, the prima donna, and the equally famous

teachers, James Kwast for the piano, and Iwan Knorr, who has launched so many composers forth into the world. Strange to say, however, though Grainger learnt much in his pianistic art from Kwast, yet with Iwan Knorr he could not be said to "get on," and apart from a certain grounding in harmony and counterpoint, he never availed himself of that Master's valuable criticism in purely compositional matters. From the first, Grainger elected to go his own way, and to be guided by his intuitions rather than the suggestions of a teacher, and I think he never really understood Knorr, nor did Knorr really understand him. In fact, there is a certain type of embryonic genius that is impatient of any species of restraint, and prefers to blunder along many wrong roads independently than be led along the right one by a masterful hand, and Percy Grainger is not so very exceptional in this respect, for one of Germany's greatest living painters, Melchior Lechter, showed this same characteristic, when he remarked: "I have never learnt anything of much value from my masters; I found out everything for myself." Grainger, then, did not trouble to learn the rules (as most of us do), in order to know how to break them—he merely broke them from the beginning. Swerving away very soon from his Handelian tendencies he began to show a harmonic modernism which was astounding in so young a boy, and at times excruciating to our pre-Debussyan ears; and, strange to say, he began writing in a whole-tone scale without knowing of Debussy's existence. At sixteen years of age he had, in fact, developed a style, and that style was the outcome of a discovery, and a literary discovery, not a musical one; for he had discovered Rudyard Kipling, and from that writer he imbibed an essence and translated it into music.

Those who know well the life of Robert Schumann will remember the influence that genius of vision, Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, exercised upon his musical personality. It would be hard indeed to be able to trace from what *musical* fountain Schumann imbibed his style, and one is constrained to feel that if Jean Paul had never existed, never could there

have been a Schumann as we see him to-day, or even a Schumann at all. And that same question undoubtedly applies to Percy Grainger and Kipling; although, in reality, the question is vain, for Chance is only that phantom outlet by which certain difficulty-involved scientists attempt to emerge from the ruck of their dilemma, but for a philosopher the word hardly exists. We may take it, then, that there is an artistic link between two souls, and as much the outcome of a self-made destiny, *i.e.*, the law of sequence and consequence, as there are links of hatred and love: and that great law destined Kipling and Grainger to exist on the material plane at the same time. Now, one notes that it is only a great artist who can draw his influence from another art instead of his own. A small composer is usually influenced by a greater composer whom he copies with an admixture of an unpleasantly tasting honey; a sweetness which is the invariable concomitant of weakness. But it was not in the nature of Grainger's talents to do this, except at the very babyhood of his musical awakening, and in finding Kipling he found also *himself*; or I should add, at any rate a great part of himself. Certainly the best music he produced at that early period was to be found among his settings of that famous writer, and one song, "The Men of the Sea," stands out as a gem which the dust of a good many eventful years has not succeeded in tarnishing. It is, of course, obvious that where the writer and the composer were so unified, a perfect work of art was the result, and from that beginning up to the present time, whenever Grainger elects to produce one of his Kipling's settings, be it song or chorus, he *becomes* Kipling in a manner which nobody else in the musical arena can approach.

The present age is the age of harmonic invention: as in Bach's time polyphony was the great characteristic of serious music, and in Beethoven's day formal structure, the present day shows an advance in harmony—beginning with Wagner—which is likely to extend into possibilities of which few can dream at the moment. But harmony is not all that the

present has to dole to us, for there is slowly appearing in our midst a great revolution in musical rhythm. Now, although Grainger had never heard a note from the pen of Scriabine, yet at the age of seventeen he had great schemes of entirely revolutionising the existent laws of rhythm, which he demonstrated in a setting of the "Song of Solomon," hidden away now among his many unpublished works. We are in hopes that one day he will rework this really beautiful beginning to his creations in the field of irregular rhythm, for it was filled with a melodic and Eastern sensuousness, truly captivating, though the harmonic invention does not show this really great harmonist at the summit of his inspiration.

From what has been said, it is self-evident that Grainger is not one of those individualist talents that begin, as it were, very modestly and only evolve their full style at the noontide of their lives. Not like either Wagner or Beethoven was Grainger in this respect. At the age when Wagner was writing offensively like Meyerbeer, Grainger was already writing like himself, and this being so, it does not appear quite so strange as it might, that he is able to dive into his greatly loaded coffers of manuscripts and restart working upon some composition he has commenced many years previously. He possesses, in fact, countless sketches of works he intends to finish and, unlike most composers, he does not find himself in the dilemma of having wandered so far afield from the road of his original inspiration as to be quite unable to find his way back again. In one sense, therefore, he is not an evolving artist, but one who branches out more than actually grows; hence he offers a psychological study of a most unusual character. Unlike other composers one cannot listen to one of his works and reflect: "This came from his early period, and this comes from his later one": and whatever the subtle difference may be to Grainger himself, one feels that such a thing as "Mock Morris," or "Handel in the Strand," might as well have been written at seventeen as at twenty-eight. With him it seems not to be a question

of age, but purely a question of mood : and we, his friends, are anxiously awaiting the day when the mood will take him to complete those more serious sketches—the “Bush Music” and the “Train Music” (strange titles, which I shall deal with later), for these are the beginnings of what promise to be very great works.

That the folk-song should appeal to Percy Grainger in the way it does is not a matter for surprise, considering the Kipling influence, but it has undoubtedly led the public to make a false estimate of Grainger’s powers as an original composer, and this has been much augmented by the large preponderance of folk-song settings which have grown popular among his published works. Now, a man nearly always becomes celebrated by his lightest, most frivolous, and most easily understandable works : this may be a tragic fact to the composer himself, but a fact it remains, all the same, and a very obvious one, too, and Grainger has certainly become a victim to this trait in the public’s mentality ; for having given the public a few “light” works, it at once supposes that he can write nothing but “light” works. It is, therefore, one of the objects of this article to dispel that entirely false notion, for certainly the “Hill Song” for wind instruments, “The English Dance” for full orchestra, the “Father and Daughter” for male quartet chorus and orchestra, including a number of guitars, are works of paramount seriousness, displaying an inspiration and a technique which awakened, in many of us, one of the greatest musical sensations we have had for many a long year. But it must not be supposed that in talking of seriousness one implies anything which could for a moment suggest dullness or the academic. Grainger is anything but classical ; he is not, like Max Reger, a sort of elongation of Brahms ; indeed this goes without saying, but one may add with truthfulness that he is not an elongation of anything, but the essence of folk-song augmented to a great work of art. Even when he keeps the folk-songs almost within their original dimensions he has a

way of dealing with them which is entirely new yet, at the same time, never lacking in taste. What a gem does the old song "Willow, Willow" become when transformed by this musical alchemy; also the plaintive "Died for love," a masterpiece of mood and old-world poeticalness, and to mention another "fancy" of supreme beauty—"My Robin has to the greenwood gone": for in this dream of charm Grainger has taken but one little phrase and, instead of "working" it, as most composers would have done, he has *continued* it after his own fancy and exhibited a novel method of phrase-treatment which, no doubt, will prove an inspired suggestion to many followers.

That Grainger is a choral writer of exceptional power, those people who know his works at all are aware, but here again they are liable to overlook his lengthier works in that direction, such as *King Olaf*, and others. Grainger has, in fact, a choral technique which only the initiated can divine, for he manages to draw effects from a chorus which have remained latent heretofore, and the choral writers that will come after his day will owe him a debt in the field of technique.

I have already said that Grainger presents a psychological study of great interest, and I will now pass on to those traits in the man which are so closely interwoven with his music, and account for much that might be easily misunderstood. To begin with, as a soul-type, Grainger is obviously a Northerner, saturated with the influence of a previous Northern incarnation. His entire appearance is replete with this idea, and his love for Northern folk-song, Northern languages, authors, and the people themselves, point to something for which alone the doctrine of reincarnation can furnish a rational explanation. From the spirit of force, physical and otherwise, Grainger has derived a deep inspiration, and I can remember with what child-like glee he watched three perspiring men trying to lift a piano round the bend of a poky little back staircase on a phenomenally hot July day—for it is from the aggregate of such small incidents that one gains so much insight into a person's soul. He has, in fact, for an artist, in him a most

strange spirit of athleticism, and whenever circumstances allow (and sometimes when they do not allow) he will run or jump, when other persons would be walking, and make the ordinary things of life, such as opening a door, into athletic feats by trying to turn the handle with his foot. In short, the viking having no longer difficult crags to climb, it would seem that he is compelled to make difficulties to let off the steam of that viking spirit transported into the present century. But this athleticism does not stop here, it flaunts itself in places where it is strangely out of place, and unblushingly becomes nothing else but extremely vulgar, for, to the despair of his eminently refined and much-respected publishers, Messrs Schott & Co., Grainger insists on filling his catalogues and musical works, not only with golfing expressions, but also with culinary phrases, so that his prospectus is a very masterpiece of slang and vulgarity, causing not a few people to dismiss him and his works as something not worthy of being taken seriously. Now, it is not difficult to understand that a certain type of athlete might entertain a dislike for the artistic, but that a musician should incline that way seems undoubtedly very strange. Nevertheless, with Grainger this is certainly the case, and his dislike of the artistic brings him so far in the opposite direction as to end on the plane of vulgarity. Not only is his prospectus set forth in the manner stated, but the printing of his covers looks as if it ought to depict the words "To Let, Furnished," rather than the title to some piece of music. One must not forget to add, however, that the titles themselves are thought out with a view to being the acme of anti-artisticness, and the climax to this species of title is a work called *The Arrival-platform Humlet*, which means a tune one hums when standing on the station platform awaiting the arrival of the train.

Grainger, then, unblushingly likes vulgarity, and I wish to emphasise the fact, because when the obvious and the vulgar appear in his music at times, it is *not* because nothing better

"occurs to him" (to use a foreign idiom) but because, as with Kipling, the vulgar evidently means to him a certain strength. The equivalent to such a line as "We stood upon the star-board, a-spittin' in the sea," gives to Percy Grainger seemingly the same sort of sensation of strength that a swear-word gives to Masfield, or some unpoetical part of the human body gives to Walt Whitman! It is also for this reason, obviously, that Grainger often selects words for his songs, which cause his female singers to be quite unable to preserve the normal tint of their cheeks when obliged to pronounce those words to an audience. I do not imply that the words are vulgar in the sense that Bessie Bellwood was, but simply that they are flavoured with that archaic tendency of calling a spade a spade—which is no longer a habit of polite society, even if it ever were so.

Now, there are some, even among Grainger's admirers, who dismiss this side of his personality with the convenient word "pose," or regard it as one of those "kinks" in the brain so often to be found (they think) in people of talent. In short, to be different from any one else, or to like things different from those others like, this in the eyes of so many is at once to be unnatural and a *poseur*. But it is never in this frivolous manner that psychology deals with the objects of its study, and it realises full well that nobody is a greater *poseur* than the conventionalist and the Pharisee: for as no two people in the world are exactly alike, having neither the same taste nor the same inclinations, to ape the actions and thoughts of others is at once to be unnatural and tinctured with posefulness. Indeed, only he who goes along the road of his *own* tastes, desires, and inclinations, is the real antithesis to a *poseur*; and for this reason the artist diverging from the majority in most things more than the ordinary person is liable to be regarded as unnatural, when in reality he is just the reverse. With Percy Grainger, therefore, it is not a question of being a *poseur*, but of not knowing when to pose at the right moment: of when to swerve aside from

the road of his own inclinations. A man's creative individuality is the outcome of his admirations, but for general sense of fitness one wishes sometimes that Grainger would pose to the extent of occasionally hiding his admiration, lest he be too much misunderstood, and thus hinder the acceptance of his great gifts to the world of music. His admiration for detail, to give another example, although of great value when attached solely to the actual necessities of musical expression, leads him into displaying it when it can have no possible interest except for himself: and certainly, when combined with his love of purely English words, it reaches not only the plane of the *unessential* but very often also of the grotesque. A very casual contemplation of his musical directions would lead one to infer that the Italian language is not plain enough to gratify his taste for the straightforward and eminently practical, and that he feels constrained, in order to ensure his being entirely understood, to resort to the use of his own language; but on closer scrutiny one finds the whole case to be *vice versa*, and that he is compelled to place Italian (in brackets) to explain the slangy obscurity of his English.

I have treated these "defects of his qualities" (if so one may call them) at some length, on account of the important part they play in the minds of those who come across a sheet of Percy Grainger's music for the first time; for, as already hinted, many and great misconceptions are often likely to ensue. To glance at some work of his and immediately perceive such words and phrases as "bumpingly," "louden lots," "hold till blown," "dished up for piano," might excusably awaken the idea that Grainger is possessed of talent, but hardly possessed of manners; yet such a reflection were absolutely untrue: for although he may take a delight in watching perspiring men lift heavy pianos on hot summer days, he seems to take equal delight in behaving to the most polished perfection in the hot drawing-rooms of duchesses. Indeed, his nature is of so great a loveliness that he can hardly be said to have an enemy, unless one

could be found among those who never come into contact with him, and therefore can dislike him merely in theory. He seems to find, in fact, a place in the area of his interest for an astonishingly large diversity of human temperaments, and one feels that if it were not a social impossibility, he often would be disposed to invite among his more distinguished guests some road-mender or 'bus-conductor who, by the turn of a phrase or some particular form of Cockney intonation, had given him a moment of amusement. And it is this very large-heartedness, showing itself in his music, which gives that music such a large compass of appeal; for, unlike most great talents, by the variety of his creations he can draw people to his musical heart, so to speak, whose own musicality is of the most meagre sort. In other words, Grainger appeals to the unmusical, just as Kipling appeals to the illiterate: unlike such men as Bach or Brahms, he holds among the many things of his creative output "fancies" and quaint musical conceits which *everybody* can understand; and these special things are not written in order to please the public—a device to which Grainger would not descend—but because they are a certain obvious simple part of his childlike nature to which at times he feels he must give expression. There is also a very strong vein of a certain species of sentimentality in his character, which breathes through his melodies and touches at once the heart of the most "Simple Simon" of musical comprehension: for although Grainger has an intellect of which many a bookworm might be envious, it dwells side by side with a child-likeness charming as it is surprising; and this child-likeness manifests itself in a most sentimental attachment to things which appear to possess no value, such as highly and most offensively immature manuscripts of my own (I regret to say), which he hugs to his heart in a manner a child hugs a broken toy, merely because it is old and broken. I do not mention this fact, however, in order to work off some of my annoyance, in that I can never get back these tattered swaddling clothes of my

musical infancy in order to destroy them, but because I imagine this trait in Grainger's character may have some connection with the fact that one sees so often on his own manuscripts such indications as, "Begun in 1900, ended in 1914." In other words, because of this trait of his, do these old ideals and youthful inspirations draw him back to them, so that he must needs take them lovingly and bring them to completion after so many years? If it be so, one can only say that he succeeds where so many others fail.

In conclusion: contemplating Grainger's *entire* musical personality (for I would repeat this is essential), I see in him all those elements which make the "immortal artist"; he exists as something quite new in musical expressibility; he has invented new forms or considerably enlarged and transformed old ones; he is a great harmonic inventor, yet, unlike Schönberg, he does not lead us into the excruciating. Furthermore, although at times he is a little too unafraid of the obvious, he is entirely consistent therein, and one sees at once how little such a thing is the outcome of weakness. In addition to all these characteristics, he can equally show forth a poetry and pathos which speak in sublime dulcitude to the soul, and a rollicking liveliness which awakens energy almost in the limbs of the decrepit. Can one demand a more all-encompassing plane of emotions in one individuality than this?

